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FOUR YEARS

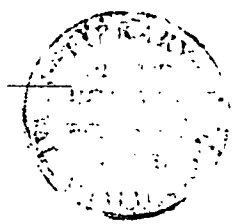
IN

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

84673

BY COWPER ROSE, ESQ.

ROYAL ENGINEERS.



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PREFACE.

THE letters from which this volume is principally extracted were written to a brother, during a residence of some years in Southern Africa. In preparing them for publication, many alterations were found necessary, and much of minute adventure and individual feeling, which could have no general interest, has been discarded; while, perhaps, more than enough of the familiarity of their original manner—a manner which was natural in writing to a brother—is retained. In some instances the contents of several letters have been condensed, and they now appear as one; the

writer is aware that they are very inartificially blended, though he doubts whether more labour would have improved them; for the whole is but a collection of sketches, and laboured sketches are seldom graceful. If he has dwelt too often and too long on the pleasure derived from the beauties of natural scenery, he can only say, that the feelings he has expressed are unaffected, and were suggested by the scenes amid which it was his chance to wander.

The author attempts only to describe what fell under his own immediate observation. His object in his rambles, being to seek amusement, he writes but with the view of amusing others.

This volume contains nought "unborrowed from the eye:" all that caught its glance, and on which that glance lingered—all that is beautiful or stern in nature: the gleam of the river—the gloom of the forest—the shadow of the mountain—the swift burst of the troop of

graceful antelopes—the towering strength of the elephant—and the bold bearing of the free-born savage, the author has in these pages endeavoured to delineate.

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FRONTISPIECE.

BIVOUAC IN KAFFERLAND.

FOUR YEARS

IN

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

LETTER I.

Society at Cape Town.—The Government Gardens.—Dance of the Slaves.—The Ladies.—Marriage.—The Signal-Station.—Amusements.—Races.—Dress of Indian Servants.—Fashionable Equipages.—Fancy Ball and Masquerade.

MOST conquered or ceded colonies receive from the conquerors the stamp of their manners and customs; and though the elder Africanders* keep a sore and sullen distance, yet

* The designation by which the Cape-born Dutch are distinguished.

their sons and daughters move with the march of events, (if not of intellect,) and make an attempt at imitation not always unsuccessful. It is thus the society of Cape Town is a copy of English society, and, like most copies, catches little except the faults of the original. A ball-room here is much like a ball-room with you, and the ladies dance as well, and dress more gaily, show the same becoming timidity in being introduced to their partners, and commence an immediate flirtation in much the same manner. But this is what you see every week; let me try to describe some of the points in which we differ; and I know not that I can do it better than by taking a stroll in the Government gardens.

It is Sunday, and the bands are playing, the people assembling under the shade of the oaks, and the scene is gay with many coloured dresses; even slavery wears a smile. Here is the lounging officer, and the still more lounging Indian, yellow, listless, and motiveless; the Dutch ladies, who,

though they want the fresh complexions of England, are still pretty; the Malay, with his high conical hat, or turbaned handkerchief of blue or crimson, and red sash, his bare sinewy throat, straight handsome outline of countenance, and tiger eye; then there is the female half-caste slave, (that is, having an European father,) whose form is graceful and step elastic, the blood-tinge of whose cheek shows through the clear brown complexion, which is shaded by curls of glossy blackness, and whose dark eyes glance wildly round; and these strangely contrasted figures are walking in the shade, thrown by the trailing branches of the African oak, through which gleams of sunny light find their way, and touch with a momentary brightness the gaily-coloured dresses of the passers by.

Leaving the Government gardens, we will look at the dance of the poorer slaves, whose hideousness renders itself more hideous by the most fantastically ugly garments: the sounds they dance to cannot be termed music, and the dance, (that which is common throughout the

East,) which, when performed by beauty, might be voluptuous, is here only disgusting.

This, you will tell me, is mere surface; and what is society but surface? yet to those who wish to go deeper, and to watch the changing and vagabond race of this half-way house, where the vices and follies of the East meet, and shake hands with those of Europe, the scrutiny will not go unrewarded. I leave the vices to graver writers,—to those who make strange discoveries and bold assertions, and on an acquaintance of six weeks with the poor Cape, reverse for it the epitaph which so nobly commemorates the family of Lord Lucas of Colchester, wherein it is said, that all the brothers were valiant, and all the sisters virtuous; I can only say, that the author must have had opportunities of judging, which I, in a much longer residence, have not attained. Let the follies then be my province, and let me treat them in the same manner as I have mingled in them, not lingering until they weary, but

"Lightly skim and haste away."

There are the ladies who touch on their way to the Indian market, all going out to pressing friends or relations, and not one having the most distant thought of marriage; then there are the Indian invalids, who come to pass their year of restless idleness, and to spend their allowances at the Cape; and it is among these that the spinsters look for husbands, and often find them. The ladies pass over the bilious complexions and broken constitutions of the gentlemen, and they (what can they less?) excuse the total want of education, and a few other things that in England are considered essential; but what woman ought to be, what an English woman is, one who leaves his country as a boy, can have but little knowledge. Then the Cape ladies are frequently pretty, dance well, flirt readily, and speak their broken English softly, perhaps offer to teach the Indian Dutch, excite a kind of interest, at first rather sleepy, then less drowsy, and as he (after having been to the pastry-cook's) has nothing else to do, he becomes

attached. Such is the stuff of which marriage here is frequently made.

But, even in this most sketchy description of Cape Town, I must not omit the Signal-station; for, without that and the table-cloth on the Table Mountain, and the south-east wind that it denotes, I know not what we should have to talk about. From the first announcement of an approaching vessel, by the appearance of a black ball on the signal hill, all is anxiety. "Is it English?" becomes the general inquiry. The next signal says, "English;" then, "Is it from England?" "Yes." Then, "Has it a mail?" and the signal tells that it brings a mail; and lastly, the date of its leaving the Downs; and the health-boat puts off and returns with the mail; and people meet each other with bustling, restless looks, and tell that there are five large boxes; and the post-office is thronged with anxious busy faces, and the files of newspapers, complete to a recent date, (that is, some three or four months old,) are sent to the library, and some determined

politician has possessed himself of the last, containing a speech of Brougham's on the state of the Cape, and appears to the anxious expectants to be spelling it through, even to its last advertisement.

We have amusements too, at least they go by the name; and first on the list come the races. You who are only acquainted with those of England, the gayest and most exhilarating of sights, would smile at our's: but they serve their purpose—they do to bet on.

After much delay and high-raised expectation, one horse invariably bolts, another does not save his distance, and the third comes in at an easy gallop; a finely contested heat, and giving rise to many conjectures as to how it would have turned out, had it not been for the bolting: then our Hottentot jockeys, how they would be cheered on an English course; some in trowsers, some in boots, some in white satin caps, contrasting beautifully with their yellowish-brown faces of strange ugliness,

> "Each gives to each a double charm,
> Like pearls upon an Ethiop's arm."

The ground is dotted with horsemen of all classes—now pricking their steeds into a gallop—now moving languidly over the parched sun-scorched grass;—there is the gaily-dressed and well-mounted officer—the still better mounted Indian—the large-bodied Dutch boor, in his rough duffle jacket and sheep-skin trowsers, and the Malay in his conical hat, casting a broad shadow from which his wild eyes glare. There are many pedestrians, among whom the soldiers show conspicuous; then there are the slaves in their best dresses, and as happy as if to-morrow was not to bring a renewal of their toils, as if it were to be all holiday; for, to judge from the numerous sets of white teeth that are exhibited in tremendous grins, they "take no thought for the morrow."

Sometimes, too, is to be seen a group of Eastern figures in their rich and variously shaped turbans—the most graceful of head-dresses, in all its varieties; linen vests sitting close to their light forms, and white petticoat trowsers. The appearance of these men is fre-

quently noble and imposing, though they are but Indian servants; their features are generally fine, always expressive; the well-marked brow, clustering luxuriant hair of raven blackness, mustachios clearly defined upon the dusky skin, and bare and muscular neck, complete a figure, that, when I have often seen them standing behind the chair of their listless master, I have thought (if the mould in which man is cast means any thing,) born to hold a higher place in the creation than the beings whom they served.

Then all the equipages in the colony are collected on the ground, taking their stations on either side the winning-post, and lining the course as far as they extend, the higher places appertaining to the carriages of the higher powers, and exhibiting the beauty and fashion of the Cape. Here congregate the horsemen, each with his unmeaning speech of hope or fear, uttered in the same manner and with the same smile, or bet of gloves, with the attendant apprehension, that there are none small enough

in the Cape Town shops, for that fair delicate hand,—a pleasing name to give to a set of brown bony fingers, resembling nothing so much as the consumptive talons of an expiring vulture. One set passes on to repeat the same things at the next carriage, and is relieved by another, equally agreeable and intellectual. Ladies, how often have I pitied you, obliged to smile, when you would have given the world to yawn!

It is amusing to mark, in riding along the line, the regular gradation from the well-appointed English carriage, to that curious piece of antiquity, the ancient Dutch—the gig, the light waggon-cart, and the long heavy waggon with its eight horses in hand, hired for the day, and stuffed with black damsels arrayed in their brightest colours, and determined, if one may judge by the eating and drinking that is going forward, accompanied by loud bursts of laughter, to make the most of their *day of pleasuring*.

There is, however, society among the resi-

dents of Cape Town and its neighbourhood that is well worth cultivating, and some of the Indian families are informed and agreeable people; but in the hasty sketch of a town, there is no individualizing, and, in general, nothing can be more frivolous and insipid than our parties. Information is the exception—frivolity the rule; but I see that I am describing the society of the Cape Town by a definition that will equally suit that of any other country.

Our gay season, that is our winter, answering to your summer, is generally closed by a Fancy Ball and a Masquerade; the last, an amusement newly introduced, and not, I think, particularly well suited to the phlegm of Dutch temperament,—to a people the gay and the lively among whom—the frequenters of ball-rooms—entertain their partners by small talk on the value of the rix-dollar.

There are eyes, however, that could glance with sparkling meaning through a mask,—eyes of dark lustre, betraying that at some distant

period a sprinkle of black blood had mingled with and tainted the pure descent of the African Dutch :

" In Spain, you know, this is a sort of sin ;"

and not only in Spain, for here it is thought much worse of than some others, and blue eyes kindle into expression in their animadversions on their rivals.

Against the Masquerade, however, there was a very general feeling, not the less decided from its cause not being understood ; perhaps the young girls who had good faces did not see the sense of hiding them ; there were doubts whether they should accept the invitation, from an undefined fear that mischief would ensue,—a fear, however, that in the end prevented not a single fair one from appearing, though I believe it sent many away disappointed at the strict and stupid propriety of a night that had raised so much expectation. Let me not be misunderstood : I do not mean that on the whole they would have been better

pleased it had been otherwise; but when ladies are prepared to resist the slightest infringement on the most punctilious rules of conduct; when the look of insulted dignity has been practised at the glass, and the calm reproof that is to daunt the offender, tried in every tone from the mildly-impressive to the sarcastically-bitter, it requires more than female philosophy to find the flower of beauty wasted on the wilderness, no eye to admire, no hand to pluck it.

I have now discussed the Races, the South-easter, the arrival of a Mail, and the Masquerade; and I will defy the most hackneyed Caper to name another thing that

"Breaks the tedium of fantastic idleness"

in the capital of Southern Africa; unless, indeed, he chance to be a politician, a Cape party-man; for here, as in most places, the feeling is virulent in proportion to its insignificance: but fear not that I am going to inflict on you an account of our divisions, which serve no purpose that I can discover, save that of destroying the little

society that we have:—no: my description of the amusements may have been *triste*, but our politics would be even more trifling. I will spare you that "puddle in a storm."

LETTER II.

The Cape Flats.—Fransche-Hoek, a Settlement of French Huguenots.—Ravine.—Description of the Valley.—Interior of a Cape Wine Farm.—Its filthy state.—Cape Wines.—Method of killing the Tiger.—The Slave-Girl.—Conduct of Masters towards their Slaves.—The Hottentots.—Curious Adventure.—Instinct of the Horse.—Early Recollections.

WHEN tired of all that I have described in my last letter, and unfit to be a trifler amid triflers; when I find "no music in the song, no smartness in the jest," I turn my horse's head from Cape Town, and, fixing my eye on a distant hill, move over the weary waste called the Cape Flats, mounting sand-hill after sand-hill, like the wild waves of a trackless ocean; while nothing meets the eye save the land tortoise, the large footprint of the wolf, or the trail of the serpent. For miles it is a scene of barren desolation; the bushes, which the birds flit

silently among, are withered with the heat; the very stones seem parched, through which the poison-snake winds its shining length. This sandy flat is bounded by a range of mountains, in whose valleys there are many beautiful spots; green, well-watered, sheltered nooks, in which the Dutch wine-farmers have settled and built good houses, that peep out from among their rich green oaks.

In one of these houses I have been lately staying, in the valley of the Fransche-Hoek, which is a settlement of French Hugonots situated about fifty miles from Cape Town. The inhabitants are now Dutch, however, in every thing but name; they speak no French, have no French customs, and not even a religious book in that language is to be found among them: the only distinction I could discover between them and other boors was their greater fondness for psalm-singing, and their aversion to dancing. That it is far easier to retrograde than advance is known; but that these people, settling as they did, remote from

the Dutch, should yet have lost every national distinction, surprises me.

Near the valley is a ravine called the Fransche Hoek Kloof,* one of the passes through the mountain barrier, that must be crossed at some point in order to penetrate into the interior of the colony. The road through it is nearly seven miles in length, ascending from the near gorge, that opens into the valley, gradually to the summit, and descending on the other side in the same manner; and in both cases running along the face of one of the steep mountains which form the boundaries of the ravine. This road is itself well worth examining, on account of the difficulty of its execution, and the immense labour bestowed upon it: many parts are cut out of the solid rock, whose high grey crags tower above it; while a parapet wall only separates the travellers from a precipice in whose shadowy depth a stream winds its way far

* Kloof, in the country round the Cape, generally means a pass among the hills and mountains: in Albany, a deep wooded hollow, frequently the retreat of savage animals.

below, through the rocky defile,—so low, that even its roar, when the torrents pour down the steep sides of the ravine, swelling the brown rush of its turbid waters, cannot be heard.

I have been among higher mountains than those of this wild pass; but under some effects of light and shade, I know not that I ever saw a scene more gloomily impressive.

I have ridden through it when the sun stood high in the heavens, and I looked around in vain for shelter from its tremendous power, when objects seemed to waver before the eyes in the bright and sultry stillness; and my horse, with drooping ears, and feeble step and frequent halt, slowly and painfully toiled up the steep ascent; while all nature, animate and inanimate, seemed to yield to the scorching influence: when the stunted shrubs and geraniums that clothe the face of the mountain were parched, and the various proteas that shoot out from the fissures of the rocks, were twisted and wreathed into strange fantastic forms, and black as from the effects of fire.

I have ridden through it when the sun was declining, and one side of the ravine was in gloom, and threw its broad deep shadow over the hollow; and where it contracted, and the high barriers approached each other, it was strange to mark the mimic resemblance of cliff and pinnacled crags traced in cold grey shade upon the side, whose summits yet shone in the golden light of evening. It was like the dim chillness of age contrasted with the fairy colouring of youth. The only living thing I saw was of a nature to add to the stern, solitary character of the scene—a vulture, which, in turning a projection of rock, I startled from its feast: it rose slowly from the carcase, spreading its broad grey wings, and swept over me with a rushing sound, sailing up the ravine, and disappearing in the deep misty blue of the perspective.

The valley of the Franche Hoek is a beautiful and cultivated amphitheatre, surrounded by mountains—not of one prevailing form, which is so common, but as various as the clouds that

rest upon them: many are clothed at their bases, and half-way up their sides, with richest verdure, which suddenly ceasing, gives place to high grey naked cliffs; others are wholly bare, except in their shadowy recesses, where the forest trees find shelter and nourishment.

The valley has many windings, which, during a week's stay that I made with some friends, it was my amusement to penetrate,—into deep wooded hollows, or low grounds, in winter flooded, but in summer covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, rich bulbous plants, rare heaths, and bright geraniums, through which my horse with difficulty made his way; startling as we went the fairy sugar birds, that appear to derive their brilliant colours from the blossoms they feed on.

Then I would trace some mountain river to its source, having, in the attempt, frequently to cross the calm, cool, transparent water, and to break my way through its banks, fringed with high reeds, and shaded with bending willows. In following the course of the stream,

I have been much struck with the contrasts exhibited within a distance of a few hundred yards. In one part, the banks are rich with various greens, in glowing orange and yellow tints, in light creepers, which the waters touch, as they ripple by through their leafy and blossomy covert. Go but a short mile, and the scene is changed, and all around bears the stamp of cold decay and death. The barkless trunks of the trees are of a pale grey hue, withered, sun-scorched, and lifeless—the skeletons of what they were; and the river, that every where else brings gladness and nourishment, here gloomily wanders through a scene that is beyond its power,—a scene over which the fiery breath of desolation seems to have passed, and leaf, and tree, and blossom, to have fallen beneath its blasting influence.

But enough of wandering description; and I am tired of riding alone; therefore take horse, and let us turn from the river. I have been tracing,

"Through tangled juniper, beds of reeds,
Through many a fen where the serpent breeds,"

over matted vegetation, over trees whose trunks, brought down by the floods, are strewed around, covered with clustering plants, hiding the decay that lies beneath.

The horses know that they are returning home; and mine, that seemed scarcely able to drag on during the sultry day, has literally broken into a gallop. And now we are again in the inhabited part of the valley; how beautifully that farm-house peeps out from amidst its oaks and orange trees; and that high hedge covered with the blossoms of the Ceylon rose! And now that we have passed the gorge, and the valley is opening before us, many more become visible, at least, glimpses of them are caught; a white ornamental gable, or a chimney rising among deep green trees. It is evening, and the herds of cattle that have been grazing where the pasture was richest and freshest on the river's banks, and the flocks of

goats that have been browzing on the mountain's side and among the rocks, are now returning; look at them as they cross that bar of yellow light; and there too is the young Hottentot herdsman, surrounded by his dogs, with his slouched hat, from which hangs a shaggy, black ostrich feather, and his ragged dress, —he cares not, for it is an improvement on his former sheepskin covering; the same urchin that I saw in my ramble far up the glen, taking his meal so independently by a fire, the blue smoke of which curled through the trees and bushes.

We have now reached the house at which I am staying, and I will introduce you to the interior of a Cape Wine Farm, premising that you must banish from your memory all high-wrought descriptions of rural happiness, not unmingled with elegance, to be found in the vine-sheltered cottages of the South of France, or in the imagination of the novelist; here it is not to be met with, albeit they are of French

extraction; and still less must you expect any thing of the plenty of which Washington Irving has drawn so delightful a picture, in describing the Farm House of a Dutch settler of New York; a picture which, I remember, won my heart as well as Ichabod Crane's. Here the means of comfort seem of easy attainment, and nature has more than done her part—man less than his.

The houses are many of them large, and the wine-stores and slave-lodges extensive; but within is listless indolence, squalid dirt, and the absence of all those comforts which you find in an English farm of far inferior appearance. You enter at the principal door into a large darkened room, for the shutters are kept closed during the day to exclude the heat;—would that the same means could keep out the flies, that swarm in myriads, and are of all small nuisances the greatest! In this room all the members of the family congregate; here sits the Vrouw, issuing her commands from an easy chair; here the meals are eaten, the clothes ironed, the psalms sung; here the Dutch chil-

dren and those of the slaves, equally dirty, and distinguished only by colour, sprawl together on the mud floor: but I am already weary of in-doors, and the sun is sinking behind that deep range of purple mountains, and now comes the delicious hour which it would be a shame to pass under any roof, and a surpassing shame under that of a Dutch boor.

How beautifully defined and clearly distinguished are the lights and shadows beneath this sky, undimmed by cloud or vapour! and how brightly shine the intervening lines of rich sunny green, contrasted with the slanting shadows thrown by the trunks of those tall wide-spreading oaks! resembling the tree of England in leaf and acorn, but without its character of strength, and its gnarled tortuous branches; for these droop, as unable to support the weight of leaves and of those hanging nests suspended secure from the serpent, around which their yellow inmates are twittering; while the wood-pigeon is crooning above, amidst the thick and clustering foliage.

Look too at that clump of tall, thin, graceful stems diminishing by beautiful gradations, crowned with light flexile branches, thinner even than the slender willow-like leaves with which they are covered, glancing in every touch of light, and quivering in every breeze: that is the bamboo. There is the orange-tree, where the fruit and the blossom mingle; the lemon, the plum, the peach, the pomegranate, the almond; and do not despise that thinly-leafed tree and that black shrivelled fruit; it is the fig,—and in England you know not what a fig is;—but, to be perfect, it should be plucked in the morning, before the sun has reached it. I have not named the vine, though we are surrounded by vineyards, which resemble those of France, and have nothing picturesque in their appearance: long regular lines of stumps, in winter bare and black, and in summer thickly covered with leaves and purple clusters. The plant is ugly, the fruit fine, and the wine which is made from it generally execrable. This it has been at-

tempted to account for in several ways, but none, I think, satisfactory. I merely state the fact, which you who have drunk the trash which at English country inns goes by the name of Madeira, are as good a judge of as myself. I speak only of the common wine of the country; for there are some kinds pleasant and refreshing, which the farmers near Cape Town take considerable pains to improve, though none have yet been able to discard that undefinable flavour which belongs to all the wines of the country.

Let me quit this dissertation on Cape wines, and return to the farm. The sun has sunk, and the cattle, horses and sheep, are all brought into their Kraals* for the night, and woe to those that have strayed! for the wolf has now descended from the hills, and will scour the valley till daybreak; and the beautifully spotted form of the Cape tiger is sometimes to be met with in the dusk, gliding through the

* A palisaded enclosure, the Corral of South America; it also signifies a native village.

thicket, and approaching close to the habitations of man. Crouched near the sheep Kraal, the short quick howl which he gives on scenting his prey, may be heard in the stillness of the night; and in the morning the farmer finds that he has sprung the high inclosure, and carried havoc among his flock.

The tiger seems to have a pleasure in destroying distinct from the necessity which urges other wild beasts; for the sheep are frequently found untouched, save that the animal has sucked their blood. One of these beasts whose nightly depredations had roused the farmers, was killed during my stay in the valley. This is the general course of proceeding on these occasions. The animal is tracked to its lair in the thick underwood, and, when found, attacked by large dogs; if possible it flies; but when unable to escape, makes a desperate defence, raising itself above the assailants by leaping on a bush, and from thence striking them down with its paws as they rush in, and from its great strength and activity, fre-

quently destroying them. But the tiger seems to know its master foe, and should a man approach within the range of its tremendous spring, it at once leaves the dogs, and darts upon him, and the struggle is then for life.

I was told of a slave who, on going out early one morning to look after cattle, heard his dogs baying at a distance in the jungle, and, on coming up to ascertain the cause, was met by the tiger's spring. The savage clung, and, seizing him by the nape of his neck, tore the skin off, until the scalp hung over his eyes; but, even in this state of torture, the slave drew the wood-knife from his belt, and stabbed him to the heart.

In general, the man stands at a distance, waiting his opportunity until he can fire without injuring the dogs; and in this manner the animal I speak of was killed, as the single round hole in his rich skin proved.

The farms here are all cultivated by slave labour; and though slavery in this country wears not its most degrading form, there is still much

that is revolting. The timid, silent step with which the young slave-girl enters the room—the subdued tone in which the message is delivered—her look of apathy, where all the warm-stirring blood of youth seems tamed down,—and when I have gazed upon dark lustreless eyes that were born to flash, and upon the listless form that was born to bound, I could not but feel that the being before me was bowed down—that all the energies which liberty would have called forth, were crushed beneath the severity of her lot.

In travelling, when stopping at a boor's house, I remember thanking a slave-girl for some trifling service, when she turned to her companion, with a look of more than surprise, and they both burst into uncontrollable laughter—laughter that to my ear "had no mirth in it," for it told of a state in which blows might follow the non-performance of any command, but to which thanks were an unknown sound. All this is characteristic of slavery, and strikes an Englishman from its strong contrast with

the respectful yet cheerful manners of the servants of his own country.

It is argued by the defenders of the system, (and the degraded tone of sentiment which pervades a slave country, and which can calmly calculate the value of a human being, is not one of its slightest evils,) that the slave is fed well, that he may work well, and treated mildly because it is the interest of the master to keep him in health—that he is spared as we spare the horse, that he may last to the journey's end; and such motives are, I believe, as high as any that generally actuate the conduct of a Dutch boor towards his slaves. Much cruelty may, however, be exercised without touching life or limb, and even interest is not always powerful over the passions of a race of men, who, living in remote parts of the colony till within a few years, laughed at the orders of a distant Government, and when it was attempted to enforce them, rose in rebellion against it.

In and around Cape Town, I believe that

actual cruelty is rare; but the savage characters and habits of the Border boors, the difficulty of informing the slave of the ordinances that have been made for his protection, when it is the interest of the master to prevent it—the uncertainty of obtaining relief—and the dread of attempting to oppose a power beneath which it has become habitual to bend, give but too much credibility to the tales that are told.

It has been said by one whose deep knowledge of human nature cannot be questioned, that "there are few minds to which tyranny is not delightful;" and the young Dutch child is early initiated in the knowledge of cruelty, and the little slave who is permitted the honour of sharing its sports, in the duty of submission —for the impatient, angry temper of the one finds vent in blows, beneath which the other is born to crouch; and a lesson learnt in childhood is not easily lost. Then there is in this country a distinction founded on colour, which places the black beyond the pale of those feelings which influence our conduct to those

around us:—fear, in some shape, is frequently the basis of the moderation we show to our equals, and a master's treatment of a slave wants this curb, and renders the brutal blow of passion, which the white man knows that the sufferer cannot return, as common as it is revolting. That there are households in which the slaves are happy under judicious kindness, I believe; but this is owing to the favoured nature of the master or mistress;—it is not the consequence of, but the exception to, the system—for, in general, any state of society in which much is trusted to the humanity of man, must be bad. It is said, and I believe with truth, that the slaves are almost always vicious: the masters should be cautious in using this argument, for they generally give the first lesson of crime to the young females; and drunkenness, the vice of the men, is almost pardonable in a race rendered brutal by severity, and who have no escape from hardship, save in degraded insensibility. It is urged, too, that they are ungrateful: poor

wretches! their opportunities are not frequent; for that which a master considers kindness towards a slave, is frequently but the effect of momentary caprice—nothing that influences general conduct, or merits gratitude.

Even slavery, however, has some advantages to counterbalance a load of evil:—the slave never knows the extreme want felt frequently by the labouring class of Ireland, and sometimes by that of England; and when old age comes on, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, he is supported by the family with whom he has lived from childhood: there is no beggary, and there is no workhouse.

This is the bright side of the question. There is another, and that not an uncommon one:—the master is ruined, and his property put up to sale; the old slave is purchased for a trifling sum, and doomed to wear out his days in a new family, who have little feeling for his infirmities; he is surrounded by those who are indifferent to him, and derives no assistance in his labours from younger hands,

for his children have found other masters; and in his age, every tie that bound him to life, and reconciled him to his fate, is broken.

When no longer under the eye of the master, the slave becomes a completely different being, joyous in proportion to his habitual depression. I have witnessed several exhibitions of this kind, and was particularly amused at a Sunday evening scene that occurred during my stay in the valley. The family had gone to a distant church, and the slaves, taking advantage of their absence, had procured a fiddle, and got up a dance in one of the outhouses. I was watching them—highly delighted at the grotesque attitudes of the waltz and the quadrille, the airs and graces of which were admirably caricatured by Mosambiques and Hottentots; coffee was handed round, and all was good humour; when, just as

"The mirth and fun grew fast and furious,"

the rumbling of a waggon was heard—the fiddle ceased to squeak—the lights vanished—all was

darkness and silence—never had the crowing of a cock a more instantaneous effect in fairy tale.

The Hottentots in this country (of which they are the original possessors) hold a place between the free people and the slaves—they are not, like the latter, sold, but are allowed to hire themselves; and the shepherds and herdsmen of the farmers are frequently Hottentots.

The wandering life which they formerly led, and for which they are from their restless habits particularly fitted, is no longer permitted; for, when one of this people approaches a town, should he have no master, he is sent to the district prison, until he can procure one. They are a very extraordinary people, ugly beyond description, and on some points, simple and ignorant to an extreme, that in England would be considered idiotcy: for instance; I have known a man, on being asked his age in a court of justice, answer, "that he did not know, but he thought he must be three years old;" and yet when it is necessary to send horses

from one part of the colony to another, over barren tracts, wild mountain passes, and rapid rivers, it is the Hottentot to whom they are intrusted, and he traverses the country, even though unknown to him, with the certainty of instinct.

During my stay, a Hottentot girl came to offer herself as servant to the lady who was lodging at the farm; she was from Gnadenthal, a Moravian institution of Hottentots, and was attended by her mother, an old woman, whose unnatural ugliness no description can reach, and whose tattered rags hung around her in most picturesque wretchedness: she came forward and addressed the lady, and with much action, and in tones that conveyed her meaning, though I understood not her strange language, (a mixture of Hottentot and Dutch) spoke of her child,—"she had had many, but now this was her last, and it made her heart sore to part with her." I believe that the sensibilities ('tis a pretty word) of the civilized are frittered away upon trifles—that it is the circle

which loses itself by expansion; but in savage life they have their children, and only their children, and they love them with an undivided love.

I will give you an account of another of my rambles. I had been out among the mountains, within sixteen miles of Cape Town, from an early hour in the morning, and both my horse and self began to think it time to return homewards, when the mists suddenly swept round me. I know not whether you have ever been in situations to observe the strange effects of mist, in changing the forms of mountains, in giving vastness to the minute, in now concealing, and now opening a partial and bewildering glimpse at the stupendous, until, often deceived, the wanderer loses all confidence in himself.

I was on the summit of hills the sides of which I knew to be craggy and precipitous; there was but one path down, and that a very steep one, and yet in this path lay my only hope. As long as I could see my compass, I

sought it; and though often baffled, still continued, over rock and through swamp, to make my way, until the sun set, and in this country darkness quickly follows. There was a partial light for a moment, a break in the clouds, through which the setting sun gleamed, and towards it my horse made. He seemed to have hopes, and galloped forward, bringing me to a spot where the cliffs overhung the plain below; he stopped suddenly, and the hopes of the poor horse and mine fell together; for there was now nothing for it, but to pass the night upon the mountain. Tired and wet, and hungry, (for I had tasted nothing since an early breakfast,) I dismounted under a rock, which in some degree sheltered me from the rain. I had not occupied my post many minutes, when I heard the long, wild cry of the jackal, and then the short howl of the wolf. They had scented the horse, and approached nearer and nearer. I had no arms, but collected a few stones, two of which I kept striking together to make a light, and at the same time shouted

loudly. Three or four wolves came very near, but I believe the most extreme hunger will not overcome in them the dread of the voice of man. In that the horse seemed to place his sole reliance; he kept close to me, thrusting out this head in the direction of the beasts' approach, snuffing the scent; and though we had never been particularly intimate before, he seemed to consider us as fellow-sufferers, and bit my hand, and kept thrusting his cold nose in my face, which, inasmuch as it prevented my sleeping, proved useful.

I could hear the dull melancholy sound of the sea beating at the foot of the stupendous cliffs below me, while the mists swept by me, and the moon, piercing for a moment their denseness, showed a scene the wild desolation of which I shall for ever remember. The distant booming of the evening gun had told me when it was nine o'clock. Each time that the vapours seemed to clear away, I looked to that point in the horizon where the first faint gleam of day would appear, and was often deceived,

as the moon, that rode on the hurrying rack, like a frail bark on a stormy ocean, now lifted on the crest of the wave, now lost in the whelming hollow, looked down with a cold and ghastly light on the grey rocks that were scattered around; and then a mass of murky cloud would blot it out, and in darkness I again listened to the dull, heavy sound of the surge. With this mingled the whoop of the returning wolf, and the shrill cry of the jackal, which told me that the night was nearly past; for the savage animals, after scouring the inhabited country, were once more seeking their lairs. At last I heard the morning-gun: never was sound so welcome: the clouds cleared off, the sun rose, the rain-drops glittered like diamonds on the various shrubs and flowers around me, and that gloomy and melancholy night-scene became in a moment beautiful and bright. I mounted my horse, and ascending one of the highest peaks, found myself to be far distant from the point I had been seeking; but now it was day—dazzling day; the mists no longer

obscured, but with their light grey filmy veil, added beauty to the mountains to which they yet clung. They lay in the deep valley below me, like the calmness of an inland lake; the reflection of the sky and mountains seemed to sleep upon it, so perfect was the deception. Who can wonder, I thought, that the sun should have been worshipped?

This last adventure was not altogether agreeable, but to me there is a pleasure in my solitary rides; there is companionship in the wild flowers, in the dark green heaths, and their rich purple blossoms; in the bright plumaged birds, and the shy and many-coloured lizards disappearing in the crevices of the rock; in the cameleon, dark in the shade, but taking the bright sunny-green hue of the shrub which with slow languid movement it climbs. There is a voice that speaks from the wave, that breaks in foam beneath me, and in the mass of cloud that journeys above.

You will tell me this is idle dreaming; but there are times in which I fly society to in-

dulge in such dreams, and to recall the vivid impressions of childhood—even the memory of which is more real than the things now passing. It is the scene of early morning, with its bright beautiful lights and deep shadows, when compared to which all that follows is dim, and tame, and lifeless. Do you remember our cricket at ——, when the summer-day was not long enough for our game, and we played until we could no longer see the ball? and in after-years our wanderings around the lakes, and amidst the mountains of Killarney and Glengarriffe? I know not why the recollections have entered my mind, for these openings of the past obey not our will; they come uncalled, and we cannot trace the spell that has raised the dead, and they frequently come but to add to the bitterness of regret; for there are few who can calmly look back to their days of thoughtless childhood.

LETTER III.

Graham's Town.—Population.—Situation.—Poortes.—State of Agriculture.—Produce-Waggons of the Boors.—Duchany, a Kaffer Chief.—Begging.—Different Animals.—Elephant-hunting.—Singular Adventure.—The Orange River.—The Chief Chaka.—The Kaffers.—Depredations committed by the Border-tribes.

How short a time can change our abode, our pursuits, and our companions! Three days and a gale of wind have done it for me, and I am now seven hundred miles from the Cape, at Graham's Town, the capital of Albany, which is the eastern frontier of the colony, bordering on Kafferland.

In this part of the country, the settlers who left England for Africa some years since, were located, that is, had grants of land bestowed upon them, and the population is almost wholly English.

Graham's Town, now a large, ugly, ill-built, straggling place, containing, I should think, nearly three thousand inhabitants and soldiers, was a few years back only a military post, and the mimosa tree stands in the principal street, beneath which, it is said, the first English officer, Colonel Graham, who led a military party there, pitched his tent. Colonel Graham is dead, and the second town in the colony bears his name,—a name that is often mentioned, and always with respect.

Houses have sprung up quickly of every variety of form, and barracks, and a church for the established faith, and chapels for all sects—Dissenters, Wesleyans, Anabaptists, Independents, &c. and last, not least, the handsomest building, and the most necessary, is a gaol.

The population is a strange mixture of lounging officers, idle tradesmen, (merchants, I beg their pardon,) drunken soldiers, and still more drunken settlers.

We have high authority for saying, that

"your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander, drink, ho! are nothing to your English," and the English of Southern Africa have not degenerated, if fiery visages, sun-scorched and brandy-scorched, may vouch for them.

We have a circulating-library and a fashionable tailor, whose shopboard announces that he comes from the Quadrant. Piano-forte tuners, a seminary for young ladies, and an artist, who in England was employed to copy Varley's drawings, and who succeeded, by his own account, so well, as to have his copies always mistaken for the originals; but, alas! Africa affords no encouragement to art; he lives in a mud-hovel, hawks about his drawings in vain, and his pencil fails to keep him in Cape brandy.

A book of melancholy amusement might be written, contrasting the romantic expectations of the first settlers with the squalid reality of their present state.

Graham's Town lies in a hollow, surrounded by high green hills, on which are clearly traceable, to a great extent, the roads branching out like radii from a centre, while along them the heavy ox-waggons are seen slowly labouring. These hills possess no beauty of form, and never rise into magnificence, (at least, not for Africa,) but there are many glens of calm pastoral beauty among them, and many abrupt ravines, dark with trees, and rich in every flower that loves the shade; and there are openings, *poortes*, as they are here called, bounded on either side by high precipices, from which hang the branches of graceful and feathery foliage; while in the hollow flows a stream, now flashing into light over some opposing rock, now lost in the deep shade cast by the magnificent yellow wood trees.

These poortes are favourite haunts of mine; scenes of such calm seclusion and dreamy stillness, that the foot of man seems an intrusion on the mountain hawk and towering eagle

that have chosen them for their homes. There is no sound, save the hawk's shrill cry, as it skims along in the shadow of the cliff.

"Meditation here
May think down hours to moments;"

and I have often lingered in these lone solitary dells, till the sun had descended too low to reach their depths, and the dim grey tint was stealing over all, blending the green of the foliage with the varied hues of the overhanging cliffs, that seemed to bound the rider's farther progress. And I have ascended again among the hills, now bright with the effect of an evening sun, throwing a soft yellow tinge upon every object, and casting shadows from the grey weather-stained rocks, that, jutting above the surface, give shelter to the various proteas with their rich blossoms, and to many other mountain plants. In approaching the town, of which between the hills a glimpse is now and then caught, the scene is enlivened by straggling lines of cattle, which the Hottentot herdsmen are driving home,—now winding along the

valleys, now almost hid in the blue shade thrown by a hill or by a passing cloud; and again appearing in the bright sunny lines of light. There is nothing that blends so beautifully with the softness of evening landscape as cattle returning home; they speak not only to the eye but to the mind, telling of a season of rest shared by every living thing.

Often too, at the close of my long rambling rides, on reaching the hill immediately above the town, I have found myself among the large covered boors' waggons, arrived from distant parts of the district, with their produce for the market. There they halt for the night; for their hardy inmates require no inn, but unyoke the oxen that graze around, and light the fire, about which the family assemble, — and a strange group they make. There is the farmer's tall powerful form, his vrouw—in general by no means a tempting lady; the female Hottentot servant, with the young Dutch child—fit nurse for such a babe. The Hottentot leader, who walks at the side of the

first pair of oxen, in a broad-brimmed overshadowing hat, with a drooping ostrich feather and scanty sheepskin cloak his only covering; and the large bony boor's dogs fill up the intervals of the circle. In fact, around the fire is frequently assembled the whole establishment of the farm, from which they are many a long day's journey; for towns are thinly scattered over Africa; and though in a civilized country, where time and labour are calculated to a nicety, it might appear little worth the farmer's while to bring a scanty produce to an uncertain market, here circumstances are widely different. The boor's time, after his harvest is gathered in, is not of much importance; and if the contents of his waggon can procure him sufficient to lay in his stock of powder and rough clothing for the year, leaving a surplus to pay the small tax required from him, it is enough; every thing else,—his farm, if a good one, produces in abundance to satisfy mere animal wants; and a boor knows no others.

I have sometimes lingered on the hill till the sun had sunk, watching the many flickering fires crossed by the strange figures moving about them, engaged in the important employment of dressing their simple suppers, and the scene with the calm clear night darkening around was highly animating. Gradually the fires cease to be fed with fresh fuel, and die away in red embers; the parties retire to sleep in their respective waggons, the dogs cease to bark, the children to squall, the sounding whip is laid aside, and all is hushed.

The produce that is brought to the market in the waggons that come from far inland parts of the country, has to the eye of a new-comer a strange interest, by throwing his mind back upon an earlier stage of society, when to the pursuits of the agriculturist,—partly for protection, partly for provision,—was joined that of the hunter.

In the same waggon that contains the common-place necessaries of life, the tawny lion's hide is sometimes to be met with, and those of

the beautifully spotted Cape tiger and leopard, the brindled wolf, red lynx, and of many other animals; then there are the buffalo's horns of tremendous power, from which powder-horns are formed; those of the various antelopes, the eggs and feathers of the ostrich, and rough carpets made of the spring-buck's skins.

The waggons too of the men who traffic with the border tribes are also frequently worth examining, for they bring the tusks of the elephant and the hippopotamus, the rich fur mantle sof the Bechuanas and Griquas, and their strange ornaments and arms, necklaces from which hang the teeth of the wolf and the claws of the tiger, or still more valuable, mysterious pieces of wood or clay possessing a charmed power; copper bracelets, sometimes ingeniously worked, large ivory armlets, and female caps, presenting a mass of beads fashioned in various patterns on the blue buck's skin.

Then there are the assegais of the Kaffer, slight javelins of about five feet eight inches

in length with iron barbs; these they use in war and in hunting. The iron parts of the assegais differ in form: some have a simple spear-head fastened to the thin wooden shaft, while others have below the barb a slight square iron-jagged stem with notches at its angles, two of the rows inclining downwards, while the other two have a contrary direction: this formation has the effect of lacerating the wound dreadfully when the weapon enters the body, or is extracted from it. There is much cruel ingenuity in this plan, and it is impossible not to admire the skill that can fabricate such a weapon with such imperfect means; a block of rock is their anvil, a piece of the same rock forms the hammer, and old gun-barrels or hoops their material.

War hatchets are sometimes to be seen, the weapon of distant hordes, the handles of which are formed from the straight horn of the rhinosceros.

The arms of the pigmy but dreaded Bushmen too come into the market. Nothing can be

more insignificant in appearance, or more deadly in effect, than these: the bow is about two feet six inches, the arrow eighteen inches, in length; and this is the mode of making it. Into a slight reed a small sharpened bone (that of the ostrich, I believe,) is thrust, but not fastened; this bone is poisoned; and when the weapon is withdrawn from the wound, remains behind, being prevented from returning with the reed, by a small hook placed at one of its sides; others have a thin triangular sharp piece of iron at the extremity, black with a gluey substance, said to be a strong mineral poison; some, however, describe it as extracted from serpents, and others from plants. Little is, I believe, known on the subject, except that it carries immediate death.

The missionary waggon from Kafferland, followed by its dark train of natives, who have left their own land to look upon that which the white men have taken from them; tall stately forms that gaze upon every thing with wonder in their wandering eyes, and who are

brought, that an impression may be made upon their simple minds of the power of the stranger, form no uninteresting object. Shortly after my arrival, two chiefs of high rank, Duchany and his brother, reached Graham's Town with a missionary; and in coming within sight of the town, Duchany's courage failed, and he told his conductor that it was known he had some years before led an attack against it; that his name had been proclaimed by the English, and a reward offered for his apprehension; and there was some difficulty in calming his fears and making him believe that all was now forgotten. He looked down upon its straggling streets from the hill that commands it, for some time, in silence; and then observed, "that the *kraal* was now too large to be attempted."

The Chiefs, on entering the town, had rough European clothing given to them, and went about with an interpreter begging presents. Beggary is divested of its meanness when the petitioner can by no exertion of his own obtain that which he asks for; and therefore the im-

portunity of the Kaffer amuses rather than disgusts, though it must be allowed that to satisfy him is impossible.

I was much entertained by observing a group of them in a shop which contained, among other things, hatchets, tinder-boxes, and tin and iron pots, which a friend of mine was liberally supplying them with. During a pause in their requests, the shopman said to the purchaser, "Now, Sir, notwithstanding all they have received, were you to ask for the most trifling ornament which they wear, you would not get it—a Kaffer never gives;" and to prove his assertion, he said to Duchany, "The Landdrost has given you all these things, will you not give him that ear-bead in return?" but the Chief did not appear to hear him: the question was repeated, and he then calmly replied, "If the Landdrost were to ask me for it himself, I should believe he wanted it; but I have left my own country not to give, but to receive presents."

One of their followers, a tall young man,

followed me to my house, and made it perfectly intelligible by signs, that he stood much in need of a pair of trowsers: they were given to him, and were on in a moment, the Russia duck contrasting strangely with his black skin; a pair of braces was the next want, and one not so easily supplied, but he quickly found a substitute for them in a strip that he cut from his carosse, (mantle,) which had been thrown on the floor. The young savage now surveyed himself with evident signs of satisfaction, and then looked at his former garment with contempt: he then raised it from the ground, and, as if shrinking from the touch with disgust, dropt it again, from all which it was quite clear that the carosse was a very unfit habiliment to be worn with white trowsers. There was no choice: he received an old jacket and foraging cap, and never did I make a creature so happy; he bent again and again to kiss my hand, while his wild eyes were drunk with joy.

Many months after I met him in Kafferland, and he came bounding up to me, holding out

his hand, then ran off, and returned quickly with the cap, the only part of the present that remained; and made his keeping it so well a plea for another gift. It would have been difficult to prove to him that his large black mantle, varied necklace, girdle of brass wire, blue beaded anklet, and brass bracelet, formed a far more graceful costume than that which he admired.

Sometimes, too, animals are brought down from distant parts of the interior, and pass through on their way to Cape Town; the giraffe, with its small beautifully formed head, and mild eye; the gnu, uniting the antelope, the horse, and the ox; the zebra, in whose regularly striped skin art rather than nature appears to have been at work; for all around is the region of savage animals, and many are the strange stories connected with them that would raise the incredulous brow in England; but here,

> "Men talk as familiarly of roaring lions,
> As maids of thirteen do of puppy dogs,"

and parties are formed to hunt them, among the distant settlers and boors, as you make up a pic-nic.

I will repeat, as samples, two adventures related to me by the individuals to whom they occurred, and witnessed by many; an addition that to you may be necessary, but with me their simple assertion is sufficient.

I was out elephant-hunting with a party of Dutch boors; we had killed one, a female, "and I," said the narrator, "had dismounted from my horse, which a Hottentot was holding, to allow me to cut the *wood** out of the dead beast's head, and was stooping for the purpose, when I heard a strange unnatural scream; I never heard so wild a sound of terror, and turned only to see the Hottentot let go the horse, and rush away, and in a moment I saw a tremendous elephant rearing its trunk almost above me. It was the male, come to revenge the death of his companion." "What did you feel," I asked, "at that

* A curious fact, unnoticed, I believe, in natural history, but which I have tried to explain in a subsequent letter.

moment?" "I know not what I felt—nothing,—for I have no remembrance of any thing until I found myself on the back of my horse; but the boors, who were looking on from a safe distance, said that I ran like a spring-buck, and indeed I must, for it seems that I caught my horse by its tail, and sprung on its back."

Before this adventure, Captain —— had been noted for his daring, or rather rashness, in these sports; but he owned that this completely satisfied him, and proved, what he had been in the habit of denying, that there was danger in elephant-hunting.

The other story is of an officer, who was out with a party of Hottentots, somewhere, I think, near the banks of the Great Fish River, when the men pointed out to him elephants browsing in a hollow; he left his party, and taking a small gun with him, loaded with a common ball, went to look at them, when one pursued him. In his fear, he quitted the thick bush that might have given him a chance of concealment and escape, and took to the open

ground, where the elephant was quickly close upon him. He described himself as stopping from exhaustion; and on the beast's coming close, as firing in despair,—for he had no hope that a common gun, with a small charge, could do any thing,—he scarcely took aim, and waited not to see the effect of his shot; but having gained a moment's breath, again rushed away; and as he ran, he heard a shout from his men, and thought it was sent up because the monster had reached him; but they shouted in triumph at his fall—that single shot had killed him.

There is pleasure in hearing of the excursions made by military parties, far beyond the boundaries of the colony; and on my reaching Graham's Town, I found that a considerable force (for the frontier) had been detached to the Orange River, for the purpose of ascertaining the state of the country, and of the tribes that occupy it.

There was not much to interest, I believe, in the country that they traversed; but little in-

formation was gained, and the sole enemy they met was a troop of lions.

Then there are rumours constantly afloat of some mighty force of countless thousands, that is approaching the settlement; the ball, not of snow, gathering as it rolls, a combination of many tribes, and all cannibals—an immense advantage this in warfare, as it prevents the necessity of a commissariat.

These stories have frequently no foundation, sometimes a slight one. The country of a distant tribe suffers from drought, their harvest withers, mortality prevails among their cattle, and to save the remainder, it becomes necessary to seek a more favoured tract: rendered desperate by hunger and hardship, they attack a neighbouring horde, overcome it, deprive the unhappy wretches of all means of existence, who, in their turn, are forced to play the same game with their most tempting neighbour, until at length these petty movements among the remote savages reach some tribe in communication with those upon our frontier, and the

tale, loaded with interesting exaggerations, and circumstantial details of numbers, never exceeding a hundred thousand, or falling short of twenty thousand, becomes the topic of discourse.

The first cause of these movements is generally traced to one dreaded name, the fame of whose conquests and cruelties, distant as he is from us, has reached the colony. Chaka, chief of a small warlike tribe in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay, called Zoolas, is the restless Alexander of Southern Africa. His followers are much better armed than the Kaffers, and his system of warfare is a very decided one; for, whenever a captain fails in any enterprise intrusted to him, he dies.

He has already conquered all the small tribes around, and his name is held in terror to the furthermost parts of Kafferland; for it is known that he has threatened to destroy all that lies between him and the frontier of the colony.

Though I treat these reports laughingly, as seldom possessing any more serious foundation

than that which I have ascribed to them, yet I think that were the Kaffers living on our border to combine, which they never will do, from feelings of petty jealousy towards each other, they would prove a most formidable enemy, and might, without much difficulty, destroy many of the settlers that are scattered in detached farms over Albany. A large proportion of the country is covered with a thick underwood, well calculated to conceal their movements, and to allow them to gather force, while a simultaneous attack on an extensive line would so harass the troops that are stationed at a few military posts to defend it, as to prevent their acting efficiently. In the present state of things, I do not think this ever likely to occur; for nothing but cruelty, and scarcely that, could drive the tribes into combination, and cruelty is no longer to be apprehended—but the blackened gables still remain to tell of a Kaffer war of extermination against the boors, when many acts of aggression and duplicity had taught them that there was no hope but in resistance,

and they carried it on by deeds of ferocity, only to be surpassed by those of their oppressors.

The depredations of the Border-tribes are still frequent, but they are unstained by blood, and have nothing of a vindictive character; their general motive indeed being love. Wives in Kafferland are purchased by the lover from the fair one's father, and paid for in cattle. He has none to give, but the white men have plenty; and it only wears to him the appearance of retaliation, for he knows that at various periods his country has been swept of thousands —that it is but a struggle

"Between the black-skinned bandit and the white;"

or perhaps he seeks for no justification, but assembling a few friends, whom he promises to assist under similar circumstances, they lie concealed in the high bush crowning some hill, from which the settler's herds can be seen, till they perceive them strayed to a distance, or observe that the herdsmen are absent, or too weak to resist. Then they move cautiously

down, often crawling along the ground, completely concealed in the thick brushwood,—and the cattle are gone—and the first notice that the farmer receives of his loss, is the finding his Hottentots, who were employed to watch them, tied fast to trees.

From their thorough knowledge of the country, it is very difficult to recover the beasts, unless the pursuit be immediate, and the *spoor** is quickly taken up; for winding along the hills, and through the thickly-wooded ravines, they avoid the neighbourhood of the military posts, and crossing some ford, *drift*, as it is here called, on the Fish River, they are quickly in their own country. On reaching it, part of the prey is sent as an offering to their chief, who has then a motive for protecting them against the complaint of the English authorities, and with submissive words, and total ignorance of the fact, and indignant feelings

* The term used in the country among the hunters of men and beasts for the print of the foot.

against the robbers, denying, however, that they can be of his tribe, he does it as long as he can; but when things begin to wear a serious aspect, and retaliation is hinted at, he discovers them, affects to punish, and restores the cattle, taking great credit to himself for his prompt exertions.

To one accustomed to and weary of the hacknied sameness of civilized life, there is something exciting in the frequent applications of the settlers for parties of soldiery to trace and retake their stolen cattle and horses; and to one who owns neither farm nor stock, rather amusing. A few days since, mention was made in conversation of a gentleman, who holding a farm within four miles of the town, had lost cattle; and the speaker was expressing particular regret, as he had on former occasions suffered much; and finished by saying, that he hoped the depredations had been over, as the Kaffers had left him quiet for some weeks. I smiled, for it reminded me of the Borderer's

lament at the destruction attending on the inroad of the English troops, led by Howard, described in the Lay of the last Minstrel,—

> "They burnt my little tower and store,
> It had not been burnt for six weeks or more."

Now, though all the subjects of interest I have been describing are rather of the savage order, you are by no means to infer that we are "out of humanity's reach," or wholly deprived of communication with the polished world. No: we hear every nine days from Cape Town, the African seat of government, learning, and science, (laugh if you will,) and we receive the English newspapers, and read the advertisements of Warren's blacking, and Charles Wright's vinous verses, and the mysterious hints of changes in the ministry, and the announcement of a new premier, who is dead before his long sought for dignity is known in Africa. Then we have Walter Scott's last work, which has ceased to be his last before we get it; for where do they not reach? and sometimes the novel of a day comes, heaven

knows how, among us. Think of reading Almack's in a place where, when a ball is given,—no common event, the silk-stockinged ankle is exhibited in its descent from an ox-waggon, and the beasts are turned out to graze around, until the dance is over!

Believe not, then, that I find this remote spot dull, though it is the fashion to pity those who are banished to it; for to me it unites varied sources of interest, all speaking of a new and unsettled state of society; an approximation of the artificial refinements of life, with the first, free, bold habits of the savage robber.

LETTER IV.

Description of natural Scenery.—Plants.—Flowers.—Halt on the Kap River.—Impressive Incident.—Revenge of the Kaffers.—Dutch Border Government.—The old Chiefs.—The Commando.—English military Policy.—More humane Regulations —Character of the Kaffers.—Customs.—Adventures.—Anecdotes.—Reflections.

I KNOW not whether you share the powerful interest that I feel in every thing connected with savage life. We know to what refinement and skill have brought society, and there is pleasure in retracing the gradual progress of civilization, in examining the rude commencement of arts, in discovering what has been lost, as well as what has been gained, by the exchange.

The last week has to me been one of delightful excitement. I have rode over three hundred and fifty miles, have been amidst new

scenes, new trees, new flowers, new animals, and a new people. The country through which we passed (my companion, myself, and two Hottentot soldiers,) is totally different from that about the Cape, being covered with grass, which is, after rain, of the richest green; and large tracts frequently bear a striking resemblance to English park scenery; wanting, indeed, its forest-trees, for the timber in the open country does not rise to any size, but fully atoning for this want by the beauty and variety of its shrubs and flowers; the palm-like euphorbia, with its naked trunk; the mimosa, with its delicate green, rich yellow blossom, and large milk-white thorn; different jasmines, with white clustering flowers, relieved by their dark green foliage; the speck boom, food for the elephant, almost hid by the ivy geraniums rising to its top, and crowning it with purple blossoms; the various parasitical plants; the uncouth aloes, and all those strange, unnatural, snake-like plants that creep along the ground, and are known to your green-houses. These

are a few of the plants forming the thick jungle which covers a very large proportion of the country. Then the shadowy dimness of the scenery on the river's banks, dark with its giant trees festooned with rope-like creepers, and the high weather-stained rocks, covered with trailing plants, and of strange fantastic forms,

"Like moonlight battlements or towers decayed by time."

But how idle a thing is description, and my description the most idle of all, who know not the names of what I saw, and have not words to speak their beauty.

Our party had halted on the Kap River, near the site of an abandoned military post, during the mid-day heat, and we were about to saddle up and proceed on our way, when my eye was struck by three white objects, sheltered and half-hid by the deep green overhanging bush. They were graves, the graves of English soldiers; and there was something highly impressive in finding them in a spot so wildly

remote, while the effect was strengthened by the fate of one of their tenants, which my companion told me as we pursued our ride. He had, with two companions, quitted the military post with letters for the principal frontier fort, at a time when a seizure of Kaffer cattle had been made, and the incensed natives had determined to revenge themselves on the soldiers. "In passing that bush, said my companion, the assegais came whizzing around them; one turned and regained the post, the two others spurred their horses forward; one had been struck, and the Kaffers raised that wild scream which they give when their game is wounded, and pursued him: on that rise of the hill the wounded man fell from loss of blood, and the Kaffers came up, and with the revengeful gestures of demons, plunged their assegais into the victim. His companion saw this, and rushed on, while the screams of parties, that had been placed to waylay him, rung in his ears for a distance of thirty-five miles; but he escaped them, and reached the

fort in safety. Yet, notwithstanding this story, and others of the same nature, I do not consider the Kaffers a cruel or vindictive people. The policy adopted towards them has been severe; for, when did Europeans respect the rights of the savage? By the Dutch Border-farmers, over whom their government had little control, they are said to have been slaughtered without mercy, —to have been destroyed as they destroyed the wolf. At no period, I believe, since the English have been in possession, has wanton cruelty been committed; but the natives have at different times been driven back from boundary to boundary, and military posts have been established in the country, from which we have expelled them. Orders too have been issued, that all Kaffers appearing within the proclaimed line should be shot. Some of the old chiefs now inhabit, with their tribes, tracts a hundred and fifty miles farther back than their former lands; and when one of them, St'lamby, who occupied the country near Uitenage, was ordered to quit it, he simply and affectingly said, "that

his fathers had eaten the wild honey of those hills, and he saw not why he should leave them."

In 1810, the Great Fish River was proclaimed the eastern limit of the colony. In 1820, Gaika, a powerful chief, whom we had aided in his wars, was obliged to evacuate a rich extent of land lying between that river and the Keiskanna. On this occasion he is said to have remarked, "that though indebted to the English for his existence as a chief, yet when he looked upon the fine country taken from him, he could not but think his benefactors oppressive."

It is not strange that the savages should be unable to see the justice of all this; that they should be troublesome neighbours to the settlers in a country of which they had been dispossessed. They were so: such instances were exaggerated, and a Commando (an inroad of military and boors) was the frequent consequence. The crimes were individual, but the punishment was general: the duty of the Commando was to destroy, to burn the habitations, and to seize the cattle; and they did their duty.

When these circumstances are considered, it cannot excite surprise that there should have been acts of sudden and cruel vengeance; though it may, that they should not have been more frequent in a country where they are so easily perpetrated; the thick jungle affording concealment to the ambush, and it being only necessary to drag the body into the bush, and to leave it for the wolves to efface all traces of the death.

I hate the policy that turns the English soldier into the cold-blooded butcher of the unresisting native: I hate it even when, by the calculator, it might be considered expedient; but here it is as stupid as it is cruel. The Kaffers are a numerous and a brave people, and were they but united, would prove a most dangerous enemy to our frontier settlements. They once, when driven to despair by a large seizure of cattle, made an attack on Graham's Town, which was obstinately continued, and nearly proved successful. But the period of oppression is now past, never, I trust, to return; for

the present policy pursued towards the natives is humane and honourable.

I have seen something of the Kaffers, and cannot but think, (and I have heard the same opinion expressed by those who were far better informed than myself,) that annual presents made to the chiefs, with some ceremony, which might flatter their vanity and render them important in the estimation of their followers, might prove of great use. These presents I would have made dependent on the good conduct of the tribe, and to be increased, diminished, or withheld accordingly. The experiment might at all events be tried at little expense, and if successful, would save much.

An intelligent missionary, whom I saw in one of my excursions into Kafferland, expressed it as his belief that the Kaffers are a people who had once a much greater degree of civilization than they now possess. He founded this opinion on the copiousness of their language, on their superstitions, on the observances at the death of a chief or wife, on their belief

in witchcraft, and on the strange ceremonies that accompany circumcision.

The appellative *Kaffer*, or unbeliever, was originally given by the Moors to the inhabitants of the south-eastern coasts of Africa, and borrowed from them by the Portuguese. Many tribes sprung from one common stock, and bearing a strong resemblance to each other in language and customs, bear the name, though among themselves they are distinguished by a native appellation. Thus the tribe that occupies the country on the eastern frontier of the Colony is named Amakosæ, and their country is called by them Amakosinæ. These words are formed from Kosæ, which is used to designate a single individual; and the plural, by prefixing the article Amma. Thus a Tambookie Kaffer is termed Tymbæ, the tribe Amatymbæ; a Hottentot, Umlao; the nation, Ammulao.

The Amakosæ inhabit a tract extending from the eastern frontier of the Colony to the river Baski, an extent of about two hundred miles, running inland about seventy from the coast,

and their numbers are roughly estimated at eighty thousand, under four principal chiefs, Hinza, Gaika, St'lamby, and Pato.

The tribe is governed by a chief, assisted by his councillors, nor is the slightest public act resolved on, without consulting them. The chief has little independent power, and few privileges. When war is resolved on, he leads; in hunting, his share of the spoil is large, the breast of the hippopotamus and one of the tusks of the elephant being his right. His habitation is not distinguished from that of his followers, but his cattle-kraal has an elephant's tail suspended from a pole at its entrance. He cannot command the personal service of one of his tribe without paying for it, either with oxen or beads. The life of the Käffer is one of violent excitement, or of listless indolence: the labour of the fields is left wholly to the women, while it is strictly forbidden them to enter the cattle-kraal, which is too sacred to be so profaned, and the milking is the province of the men. The Kaffers are bold hunters, and with their assegais

only, attack the elephant and the hippopotamus; but when not forced to exertion, they sit for hours around their fire, listening to the tale of the story-teller.

There are few arts among savages, for there are few wants: with the Kaffers, the assegai and kirri, a small club, suffice for war and the chase; baskets, beautifully made, to hold milk; a small rough earthen vessel for the fire, with wooden and horn spoons; while a short wooden shovel for turning up the earth, is their only agricultural implement.

Their ornaments are strange, but, relieved by their dark skins, are becoming from contrast, the necklaces being either of gaily-coloured or white beads, interspersed with the claws and teeth of wild beasts; then their wrists have bracelets of broad brass wire, while above the elbow are ivory armlets.

The appearance of the Kaffer, when prepared for war, is wild and singular, the carosse being thrown aside, as it would impede the vigour of

his movements. His covering is an ample shield of an elliptical shape, formed of a hardened hide; this hangs on one arm, while a bundle of five assegais is held in the right hand, and two lofty plumes of the feathers of the grey crane are fastened to his head by a leathern band.

Religion it does not appear that they possess; but some wild idea of a Being that breathes his anger in the thunder, and in the famine that follows drought, is to be found among them;—some dark and terrible superstitions with regard to witchcraft, and the apparitions of the dead, bear a mysterious relation to a world of spirits, but all obscure and undefined.

The rich tract which Gaika had so unwillingly ceded to his allies, and from which the Kaffers had been expelled, we have now permitted them to return to, and they are again living where their fathers lived, and cultivating the ground which they cultivated. This country, called the Neutral Ground, we were now

crossing, and had ridden sixty miles, while twenty still remained, ere we could reach the Fort.

We had seen the blue smoke of several Kraals (villages) rising among the green hills, when on a turn of the path, we found ourselves in the midst of their bee-hive huts. The men were sitting round a fire with their dogs and arms about them, and two freshly killed bucks had been the sport of the day.

The dogs set up a howl, and a Kaffer, rising from the group, advanced towards us; he held out his hand, and repeated the salutation of good-will—*Goedendag*,* but there was doubt in his movement, and fear in his eye. We gave our hands, and repeated *Goedendag*, and the rest of the horde came around us, asking for presents; but I thought that the children appeared to regard us with terror, and I doubt not that the white man is the devil by which their mothers hush them into obedience. We

* Learnt from the Dutch.

galloped on, passed through another Kraal, and arrived at the Fort.

The next day, our party being increased by a Kaffer interpreter, we pursued our journey, and bivouaked near the Kraal of an old Kaffer chief that lay in our route. The situation of a Kraal is generally chosen with an apparent attention to picturesque effect, and that which old Enno then occupied on the Beka river was particularly so:—the habitations lay on the side of a gentle hill that sloped down to a stream, and the entrances of the huts faced the rising sun; the stream flowed coolly below in its rocky channel, while the trees bending over, almost met above it, dipping their flexile branches into its waters. The low ground was thickly covered with tall trees and blooming shrubs, intersected by cattle tracks; while, in parts, the rank vegetation of nature was partially cleared away, and made to yield to small patches of Kaffer and Indian corn, roughly inclosed.

It was near sunset when we arrived; the

chief Enno and his principal men were sitting on the side of the hill, on which their habitations stood; the young men and boys were herding the cattle, while the women and girls were dancing. Our reception was very friendly; the Chief asked what news there was, (the regular inquiry both of the savage and the civilized,) and could not be persuaded that we had none, while his questions betrayed a minute acquaintance with the movements of military parties, that surprised me; and while he continued to address them to my companion, I went to the dancers. To understand the dance, you should have seen it; no description, no drawing, can give an idea of a movement which was little more than a slow walk of short steps, and yet brought every muscle of the frame into violent exertion: the dancers, linked hand in hand, formed a semicircle, from which two separated themselves, coming to the front with this slow movement, and with strange contortions, and then retired to their places, while they kept time in all this

to a strange monotonous air. The Kaffer women are far inferior to the men in appearance, for theirs is the labour of the fields that depresses the body; while hunting, the pursuit of the men, strengthens it; yet still, even among the women, when young, there are some forms of striking beauty; their black carosses hang not ungracefully about their dark forms, while the beads and ornaments, generally white, or gaily coloured, upon their arms, necks, and ankles, are in striking contrast with their dusky skins, and aided by caps, decorated by alternate lines of white and blue beads, form a costume which is extremely becoming.

I remained an hour, watching their dance; my large shooting-dress with its ample pockets being as much an object of curiosity to them as they were to me. The women thought that they must contain beads, and flocked round me with "Barseela," repeated again and again in a soft languid tone, their mode of asking for a present. They brought us sweet milk in baskets, and stood around, anxiously examining

every part of our travelling equipment; nor shall I easily forget the terror, half feigned, half real, excited by my pocket compass, from which they shrunk as if its movement was life; at length, one mustered courage to take it in her hand, and then placing it to her ear, repeated "Tic, tic, tic." This act of daring was imitated by the whole circle, who had made up their minds that it was a watch, of which to them it indeed answered every purpose.

There was one young and finely formed girl in the group, with her wild expressive eyes and beautiful teeth, on whom I flatter myself with having made an impression: her mode of showing it was singular: she picked some vermin from the hairy side of her carosse, and offered them to me; and on my exhibiting some symptoms of disgust, laughed most heartily at my fastidiousness, and put one in her mouth to show that it was good. It was the first mark of attachment which I had received since I left Cape Town, and I was

affected accordingly; and had but the refinement of sentiment been added to so touching a proof of love,—had she but sung,

"I give thee all, I can no more,
Though poor the offering be,"

I know not what the consequences might have been.

The Chief is generally distinguished from his followers by a carosse of tiger's skin, and by a narrow tasteful beaded band worn round the head; and when he stands surrounded by his armed attendants, wrapped in their dark cloaks, it forms a most imposing sight, and one which, though my expectation had been raised, surprised me. Their figures are the noblest that my eye ever gazed upon, their movements the most graceful, and their attitudes the proudest, standing like forms of monumental bronze. I was much struck with the strong resemblance that a group of Kaffers bears to the Greek and Etruscan antique remains, except that the savage drapery is more scanty; and falls in simpler folds;

their mantles, like those seen on the figures of the ancient vases, are generally fastened over the shoulder of the naked arm, while the other side is wholly concealed; but they have many ways of wearing the carosse, and of giving variety to their only garment.

Through our interpreter, we prevailed on Enno to order a dance of the men; their movement was different from that of the women, but still kept time to their voices; they threw their carosses off, and, forming a semicircle, bowed their heads low, and bounded upwards with a spring, which almost left it in doubt whether their dark forms belonged to the earth.

We remained till late among the dancers, and then invited the Chief and some of his principal men to supper at our bivouac, where, while my companion and myself discussed a boiled chicken, we feasted our guests on broiled mutton, bread, (a great luxury, with them,) and Cape brandy (a still greater). I sat with them, wrapped in my horseman's cloak, which, as approaching their own dress in form, was much

admired: the Chief indeed offered me two horses or three oxen for it; and finding that his offers made no impression, requested it as a "Barseela." Our interpreter sung a Kaffer song, which was soft and pleasing, for their language is in an uncommon degree musical; it related to some superstition connected with the stars, to which he raised his dark arm as he sung. The night was wearing away, and the men were leaving us, one by one, in obedience to the voices of the women whom we heard calling them from the hill, where the dancing still continued in the calm moonlight, and ceased not till morning, while my companion and myself slept soundly in our bivouac.

We rose early, shared our breakfast with the Chief and some of his followers, and ordered the soldiers to get the horses and to saddle up. During our breakfast, a Kaffer returned who had been sent out to recover some horses stolen by a neighbouring tribe; his search had been unsuccessful, and he waited till the Chief told him to repeat his story.

The messenger sat at a distance from the group while he gave his account sentence by sentence; at the end of each, the Chief assenting in a low melancholy monosyllable; and this lasted for more than two hours. We mounted our horses, *Goedendag* and the shake of the hand was given to half the tribe, and away we rode.

The Kaffers among whom we had passed the night, are the nearest to our frontier line, and bear the character of great plunderers, and even among the other tribes are considered desperate, and called the Murderers. Enno, their chief, is a singular old man, to whom I afterwards paid another visit, and was interested by some peculiarities characteristic of the mingled simplicity, cunning, and feeling of the savage.

In an excursion that I made with the Landdrost of Albany into Kafferland, our first night's halt was near this tribe, and we were in consequence honoured with the Chief's company, and with that of his principal followers,

some crouching down in the tent, while others choked up the entrance with their tall forms. We were dining, and food was given to Enno, who, I observed, always distributed a portion of it to his followers. On receiving a potato, and his being told that he might have them in his own country with very little trouble, he slowly and calmly answered, "I am very old, too old to learn new things; but I will take every thing that you will give me." We laughed, and told him that it was a very clever answer. "Yes, I have lived a long time in the world, and have learned cunning," was his reply.

The manner in which he tried to procure a present was amusing. "It was not for the sake of the present, but that it would be asked of him by others whether the Landdrost had passed through his country; and on his answering Yes, they would inquire what present he had received; and when he should say none, they would naturally reply, then you must have behaved ill to him, for he is very generous."

He was a strange being, and possessed more talent than any Kaffer I ever saw, his words coming from him very slowly and innocently, while there was a slight twinkle in his small sunken eye that belied his lips. I saw a white Kaffer among Enno's tribe, a hideous being daubed with red clay; and, on inquiry, found that it was the son of the Chief; and heard that on Enno's being teased about his colour, and hints thrown out of unfair play on the part of his wife, he laughed it off, and asked if they had never known a black cow have a white calf. One more anecdote, and I have done with him. He was at the Landdrost's house, and in order to see its effect upon him, a lady was seated at the piano playing a simple air, (and seldom has it been my chance to hear any one who played so sweetly,) when the old man, who was listening intently, suddenly stopped her, saying, "That is enough, it reminds me of the loss of my child, and it tells me I should go home and cry." The child to whom he alluded, and to whose death Enno often re-

curs, was shot on some occasion by the Cape Corps.

Nothing can be in stronger contrast than the wondering savage that is sometimes seen in our towns, surrounded by all that is strange, by a thousand things that speak to him of his hopeless inferiority,—and the same being in his own beautiful country, where his energies and his knowledge are fully equal to every circumstance that can occur.

Some years since, I remember seeing two of a wild and distant tribe of Kaffers, or Bechuanas, that had been brought by the missionaries to Cape Town. They were the first I had seen, and their strange costume and savage ornaments struck me, and I followed them as they were led to see the firing of the evening gun. The mingled awe and curiosity with which they approached it, each shrinking behind his companion—for they appeared to know that something dreadful was about to happen,—the anxiety with which they watched the movement of the gunners; and when the explosion

took place, the dread and horror with which they seemed overpowered; the wild glare of their rolling eyes, when they turned to each other; and the timid pace with which they stole away, not daring again to look at the object of their terror, were all highly effective.

I was told too of a chief who had been taken prisoner in some attack on Kafferland, and sent down to Cape Town, being recognized by an officer who had seen him on the frontier, and who recollected that he was famed among his tribe for his courage in the chase, and for his skill in throwing the assegai; one was given to him, and he was told to throw it, but it fell from his hand, as he replied—"that he could not, for his heart was broken!"

It did not strike me that the savage tribes are improved by the intercourse with us that has been opened by the fair that is held at Fort Wiltshire, the frontier post. I attended one of them, and was amused with the strange scene of barter,—buttons and beads for hides and ivory. Gaika, the neighbouring chief, dressed

in an old regimental jacket, was in the Fort with his retinue of twenty-five wives; and it was not without interest that I looked on one of whom Barrow had prognosticated so highly. He was then nineteen, he is now fifty, and melancholy has been the change that has taken place in the interval: the English have given him their protection, and with it their vices; and he is a sunk and degraded being, ready to exclaim with Caliban—

> "I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject,
> For the liquor is not earthly,"

—a wretched savage, despised and suspected by his tribe, continually intoxicated, and ever ready to sell his wives for brandy.

Such are the fruits of our protection! such have ever been the effects on the savage of the *kindness* of the civilized! If we find them simple and trusting, we leave them treacherous; if we find them temperate, we leave them drunkards; and in after-years, a plea for their destruction is founded on the very vices they have learned from us.

LETTER V.

An Excursion.—Travelling Equipments.—The Great Fish River.—The Caves.—Wild Scenery.—The Tiger's Haunt.—Hottentot Soldiers.—The Patrol.—Characters.—The Bushmen.—The Boors.—The Kaffers.—Anecdotes.—A Portrait.—A polite Valet.—Contrasts of Character.—Cape Scenery.—Strange Adventure.—Singular Plants.—A Dialogue.—Eventful History.—Savage and civilized Life.—The Mad Poet.—A Fashionable couple.

I HAVE been wandering, as is my custom, when I find myself fit company only for my horse and my Hottentot. Would that you could see our travelling equipage, which is of an order to startle English feelings of propriety—our horses which scarcely ever knew a stable, and never a curry-comb—our bits and stirrup-irons so embrowned by rust—our sheep-skins for saddle-cloths—our saddle bags for every thing else. Then my Hottentot has two led horses in hand, and I one; and we canter on, with the most perfect disregard of

appearance; for to the wandering savage, at least—and he is the only human being we are likely to meet—we are objects of envy and admiration. But to my ramble.

I had been told of a wild glen near the Great Fish River, which contained caverns, formerly the retreats and habitations of the Kaffers, and accompanied by a Hottentot, I rode in the direction pointed out, and with some difficulty found a young boy who knew where they were, and undertook the office of guide. I left my horse and attendant at the edge of the kloof, and descended the steep side, from rock to rock, clinging to the branches of trees, the wild grey trunks of which shot out from the rifted cliff, and at length reached the caves. I crept into them on hands and knees, but found it impossible to penetrate far on account of the narrowness of the opening, and the dirt of the rock-rabbits, their present inhabitants. If I was disappointed in the caverns, it was not so with their situation, which was singularly wild and picturesque; for, from the weather-stained and

craggy rocks that rose above their entrance, hung the ice-plants and many fantastic creepers and rock-plants, while the twisted branches and trunks of trees met above, throwing the scene into twilight gloom.

I returned to my Hottentot, and sent him round with the horses, with directions to wait, while I penetrated through the thick wood and jungle that filled the dark hollow of the glen, on one side of which rose the cliff. It was no slight fatigue to reach the lowest depth, where a stream flowed, whose rocky bed was now in many parts dry, while in others the water lay in deep black pools, rendered still darker by the giant branches of the shadowy yellow-wood tree, the foliage of which is so gloomy, that, to a fanciful mind, it might appear to draw its nourishment only from the thunder-cloud. I ascended the bed of the stream, following my young guide, who tried to quicken my pace by the information that we were in the tiger's haunt, who howled round their house, and carried away the sheep at night, and had been tracked to this retreat. Under

high dark trees, on whose trunks the damp green and brown mosses grew, and from whose overhanging branches depended the unsunned creepers, dipping their tendrils in the stream, or clustering in dark luxuriance on its banks; through the thin stems of the Kaffer coffee, which, generally low, here assumed the dignity of a tree, throwing out its beautiful palm-leaves from a trunk of twenty feet in height, bending over the water, often impeded by high rocks or fallen trees, I continued to make my way.

There was a damp and darksome character in the whole scene, indicating that the sun, even in its noontide height, scarcely sent one ray into its solitary depths; and it was now sinking behind the hills, and the sombre gloom was in character with the scenery. There was no sound to break the feeling of utter solitude; no startled bird flitted through the foliage; no breeze rippled the water, or stirred the clustering leaves.

Impressive as it was, there was relief in emerging from its shadows, and rising into the world of light, for the eye now feasted on

an extent of country rich with the glowing colours of an evening sky.

I see that I have mentioned Hottentot soldiers, without recollecting that you may not be aware that a corps has been formed for the service of the frontier, and no troops can be better calculated for the duty,—that of recovering stolen cattle from the Kaffers. The Hottentot is rather the creature of instinct than of reason, and here his instincts are particularly useful:—his sight is wonderfully acute; his power of finding his way through trackless wastes is as surprising as that of the American Indian; and he follows his prey with the certainty of the bloodhound. Add to this, that he is capable of undergoing great privation; that he can abstain from food for days, diminishing the gnawing pain of hunger by tightening *the girdle of famine* around him,* and is an un-

* When hunger presses, the Hottentot draws a girdle tightly round his stomach, which has the effect described: but even this strange power is less extraordinary than the quantity he can eat when food is offered to him, without feeling inconvenience from the long fast, or the tremendous repletion immediately following.

erring marksman, and you have all that is necessary.

In meeting a patrol, as I have often done, there is something even soldierlike in their appearance: the active form of the men; their small, bony, shaggy horses; the white havre-sack, contrasting well with the green dress; the small, dark foraging cap, the sheepskin cover for the carbine, the powder-horn slung across his body, and the fantastically ornamented tiger-skin pouch hanging from a shoulder-belt, have a rough and service-like appearance, and all is in keeping with the savage country they traverse: but take them from it,—see them on parade with the showy trappings of the dragoon, and the character is changed, and the whole thing becomes ridiculous. It is not easy to describe "the wondrous hideousness of those small men;" the high forehead, sunken in the middle; the tufted woolly head; the small, deep-set eyes; the high obtruded cheek-bones; the nose, or rather skin that is stretched over the broad nostrils; and the tremendous mouth,

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surmounted by a pair of Hussar mustaches; join all these features together in your imagination,—if possible,—and then crown this head with a dragoon shacko, with all its lace and tassels, and it may well be called apeing the cavalry. Poor devils! every one has some amiable weakness, and the Hottentot cannot resist brandy. There is not much trouble in their trials, however; for they have a strange, simple habit of speaking the truth: the prisoner, on being put on his defence, pleads that he was "more drunker than sober;" while an English soldier never yet was drunk, but only "a little the worse for liquor."

I believe that when the English flocked to see the Hottentot woman, of whom so decent an exhibition was made, the greater part thought that she was a phenomenon in her own country, and were by no means aware that the females of a whole people scarcely yielded to her in any point of beauty. This strange formation comes on after they have borne children, for their figures while young are frequently remarkably fine; the form of their necks, shoul-

ders, and arms, being generally good: their walk too is easy and elastic, and some of the movements of their dances, in which they twist beneath each other's arms, their steps keeping time to their voices, would do credit to a ball-room. They possess a very quick and accurate ear for music, and sing the hymns they learn at the Missionary institutions very sweetly. In Italy or Spain, were their voices borne on the evening breeze in the Hymn to the Virgin, the sentimental traveller would be in ecstasies; but to admire creatures with noses and mouths so peculiar, would betray a sad want of taste.

The Hottentot of the Colony is generally a degraded being, yielding to every temptation, and feeling his utter and hopeless inferiority to the white man on whose farm he lives; but there is a race who yield no obedience, and feel nothing but hatred; who, when surrounded by the boors, ask no quarter, but fight to the last, and die. These are the Bushmen, who live in caverns, in wild and remote spots: their food consists of roots, ants, and locusts; the game they can bring down with their small poisoned

arrows, and the horses and cattle they can steal from their enemies, the Boors and the Kaffers. This wretched race, whose persons and habits are scarcely human, is fast dwindling away; they have been hunted down like the wild beast, until they have become as savage; they are outcasts, and placed beyond the pale of humanity: the serpent is not more dreaded or more hated. It was the custom, till very recently, for the boors to form parties, to track the pigmy savage to his cave, and surrounding it, to destroy the parents, and to take the children for servants.

Almost all who have written on Southern Africa, both in present and former times, join in the same tale of the cruel treatment of this unhappy people.

As the tide of population rolled on, and as the sons and grandsons of the boors became too numerous for their present farms, the natives were borne before it, and gradually deprived of every fertile watered spot that could support cattle, or produce grain; until in despair they ceased to attempt to acquire property, and

taking refuge in the barren rocky fastnesses—all that was left of them—became a savage and a desperate race, living a precarious, wretched life on the plunder they could seize from their oppressors, and regarding the white man as a fiend. These, in their turn, when in want of servants, surrounded the caves of their miserable victims, and destroying the parents as useless to them from their predatory habits, took the children as slaves. This nefarious system, which, though not authorized by the Batavian Government, was never effectively opposed—perhaps for want of power—continued for more than fifty years, and has but very recently been wholly stopped; and when Sparrman travelled, I think, in 1773, it was in full activity. He mentions the numbers that they had destroyed, being a theme of boast among the boors, and gives several instances that came within his own knowledge. In his time, the Bush people were still numerous, scattered over the country in small parties, alternately the objects of dread and plunder to the farmers. Famine, and the system of extermination, have thinned them

since; and now the remnant of the race, the original possessors of the land, are to be found in a few mountainous, remote spots in Graaf-reinet and Somerset, and occupying a tract of country near the Orange River.

The traveller I have already quoted speaks of their strange dances during the long moonlight nights, and mentions an extraordinary custom, the account of which he received from the boors with whom they lived; I will give it in his own words. "Many of the colonists have likewise assured me, that their Boshesmen of either sex, used in stormy weather to abuse the thunder with the words *t'guzeri—t'gaunatsi*, sorcerer, imp, and other reproachful expressions; and at the same time, in a furious manner, with their shoes, or any thing else that was at hand, menace and bid defiance to the flashes of lightning and peals of thunder that exploded and rolled over their heads."

Whether this is true, I have not had the means of ascertaining, having never been in their country; but there is so much of wild poetry in the conception, that I cannot think it

a colonial invention. Imagine the pigmy wretches of unearthly ugliness, standing at the mouth of their cavern, watching the gathering tempest, as the lurid clouds darkened above them, while the earth shared the gloom of the heavens; and then, when after the breathless hush, the lightning's flash burst with its dread glaring light, and the thunder echoed through all the hills, imagine these savages, their umber faces lighted up to a more fiend-like expression in the blaze, threatening the storm with their furious gestures, and, with impotent menacings, breathing their wild curses against the thunder.

Some years since, I had one of these imps staying in my house, for several months; his age might be about twelve years; his height three feet; his hands and feet were wonderfully small, and beautifully formed, while the ugliness of his face was startling. The creature possessed considerable quickness, and had great talents for mischief and mimicry. His first introduction was characteristic, "Can you speak English?" I asked. "No."—"Can you speak

Dutch?" "No."—"What do you speak?" "Baboon," and before he had been in the house six hours, I caught him mimicking my walk and manner. Donald (for that was the name given him) had no taste for cleanliness, and I was obliged to insist on his going into the sea every morning at the time I bathed; this he by no means admired, and, one grey cloudy day, showed extreme reluctance; and, while standing on the sand, asked me if the water was cold. "No," I replied; and he then dipped his tiny foot in the wave, shook it, and said, "It's a damned lie, now, for it is cold."

I saw at Cape Town another boy of the same race, with three lion cubs nearly the size of mastiffs, which he was riding and beating in a manner that made me fear; but they were accustomed to him, and took it all in good part. It was strange to see them crouched around, with their eyes intently fixed on the dwarfish savage, while he sung and danced the wild dance of his country.

I lately again met with Donald, who is now living on the frontier, and his master is attempt-

ing to tame him down into a servant; a hopeless endeavour to overcome the wish for freedom, that in the Bushman is an instinct; for there is in his nature something irreclaimably savage, showing itself in frequent and long absences, from which he returns not till forced by hunger.

It appears to have been the policy of the Dutch farmers, from a remote period, to excite a feeling of distrust and hatred between the Kaffer and the Hottentot. During the Border warfare, in which many horrible cruelties were committed on both sides, the latter were generally employed as spies, and when discovered, sacrificed without mercy by the former. This feeling still continues; and the Kaffer views with high contempt the abject Umlao, (the true name of the Hottentot,) for having yielded up his natural liberty, and for having become the passive slave of the white man. The appearance of the Kaffer, his high, bold bearing, noble form, and kindling glance, all speak the free-born desert wanderer, and are in strong contrast with the diminutive figure, the strange

ugliness, the timid sunken eye, that seem to have stamped this feeble race as willing bondsmen.

It is not alone in appearance that they differ: in disposition the same opposition may be traced. The faculties of the Hottentot scarcely appear capable of carrying him beyond the present moment;—he will make a tremendous meal, though he knows not when he may procure another; he is the most improvident of mortals:—not so the Kaffer, who possesses both foresight and energy, cultivates the earth, and forms granaries for his produce—who will decide on killing an ox, then postpone it, again decide, and again defer. In short, the Hottentot is a spendthrift, and the Kaffer almost a miser.

The arms which have by Europeans been placed in the hands of the Hottentot, and the skill with which he uses them, give him a superiority that Nature has bestowed on his enemy: the assegai can ill oppose the musket, and the shield of a single hide is a frail defence against a ball. Thus their advantages

are balanced, and by repeated acts of aggression, their hatred is kept up.

I was recently riding along the ridges of the hills, looking for elephants: the sun had not yet risen, and the wooded ravines lay below me in deep sombre blue shadow, or in grey mist. We rode on, I and my two armed Hottentot soldiers, leaving a clear track, where our horses had brushed the dew from the high grass, the shrubs and flowers. At length the sun arose, lighting up successively the summits of the mountains around, and tinging the vapours that clung to them with its rich hues of beauty, while the valleys still slept in calm blue shadow, through which the river might be traced by its grey gleam in the mist. That moment, when an African sun wakes a world to life, is well worth the rest of the day, and yet we pass it, week after week, in unconscious, stupid sleep. It is at such times that I feel Manfred's passionate aspirations not to be extravagant—

> "Ye mountains, why are ye beautiful?
> I cannot love ye."

For there is a feeling excited in mountains, with their rich, soft, ever-varying hues, that human words have never yet described, but which speaks to the inward spirit with a mysterious power, until throwing off every sordid tie, it seeks to mingle its essence with, and become a portion of, that pure beauty in which the scene is bathed.

The country I was now traversing, that through which the Great Fish River winds its course, is of a very singular character. In many parts it is covered to an immense extent by a thick jungle, called the Fish River Bush, affording cover to most of the wild animals known in this part of Africa: hill and hollow are equally clothed with the same dusky foliage. In others, the rider passes over vast naked plains; nor is he aware of his vicinity to the river, until he stands on the brink of its descent, until he looks down upon its shaggy steeps, and sees a petty stream lazily flowing five or six hundred feet beneath him. The country on both sides is nearly

level, and this deep gloomy rift seems to have been formed to confine and preserve the water, which is here so precious; for, in no lapse of ages could so petty a stream have shaped for itself so tremendous a channel. I shall not easily forget the impression made on me when crossing, for the first time, this wild hollow. The sun had sunk, and there was not one touch of light on the vast and lonely scene; the high and wooded hills that shut in the river, which wound its snake-like course far below, had the rich sombre purple and brown hues of evening, and as they receded in dim perspective, blended beautifully, and melted into the grey distance. The scene would have been striking at any time, but was doubly so from the contrast of its shadowy effect with the bright sky above, for the clouds were yet gilded with the thousand nameless tints of an evening sun; the bank, forming the foreground, a kind of platform, making a break in the steep descent, was richly covered with flowering shrubs and

plants, among which the Strelitzia regina shone pre-eminent, while the Euphorbia, so characteristic of African scenery,—that strange tree whose burning milk is said to be the food of the rhinosceros, shot up its palm-like form into the bright sky. The river that flowed in the deeply shaded hollow, and whose solitary abysses afford shelter to the hippopotamus, was almost concealed in the steepness of its banks: at points in the descent, a view of its windings was caught; while, in the distance, it showed a gleam of grey and doubtful light.

Such is external nature in this rich and glowing clime. Let me now turn to human nature, and repeat the history of one of its natives, which I heard on our return from an unsuccessful search after the elephants. It is that of one of my attendants; and the conversation commenced by my observing to him, "You are not a regular Hottentot;" for, though he had the high and prominent cheek-bone, and peculiar formation of the forehead, yet

his colour was darker, and his features better. "No, I am a bastard," was his reply. This was repeated in a tone of exultation; for, that which among other people is a reproach, the Hottentot is proud of. I had heard that the man was a character in his corps, noted for his courage as a hunter, his skill with his weapons, and his knowledge of the country; moreover, that he had been a robber, and that Piet Bruintges could tell many a tale of their wild life. "Do you come then from Kafferland?"—"Yes; the Kaffers carried me away when I was young, when they burnt the boor's house with whom I lived; and afterwards I joined a party of *Schelm* (robber) Hottentots and Kaffers, and we had horses, and arms, and we would attack the boors' houses; and when the commando came into Kafferland, we would hang on their rear; and when we saw one fall behind the rest, we would dash in between him and his companions; one would seize his horse's bridle, and the others would drag him to the ground before he could un-

sling his large gun; and we would first give him *plenty* of samboc, (a whip made of sea-cow's hide,) and then *plenty* of assegai."

What think you of the refinement of flogging the wretch before they murdered him? "And what became of your companions?"—"It was near Uiteñhage, the boors left a half aum (a cask) of brandy wine in the bush, and we drank it, and the rest drank more than I did, and got drunk; and when the boors saw this, they came down, and I crept into the bush and saw them take my companions by the heads, and with their long knives cut their throats, as you would cut the throat of the land-tortoise, when its head is out of its shell." "And what did you do then?"—"The English came, and sent an order that there should be no more fighting; and I went to the school (the name for a missionary institution) for two years, and then I went into the Cape Corps." This man is now called a soldier, and is kept and paid for tracking and destroying his former companions, the Kaffers,—for destroying, with-

out the plea of resentment for injuries; formerly, when he had this excuse, he was called a robber. In truth, he seems to have been a dark bloodhound from his cradle; and he told his story in a tone of calm and callous indifference; yet he is remarkable for his affection to his wife and children,—the feeling of the tiger for its young.

Are you tired of savage life? I will introduce you to *civilization.*

The part of the country over which I have been lately rambling, contains the locations of the English settlers, some of whose houses I have in my rides visited, and certainly have found a few who retain the habits and feelings of English gentlemen; but even among the better order there are many sunk in hopeless indolence; and the hovels of the lower classes, formed of wicker-work daubed with clay, are frequently the abodes of despair and drunkenness. Yet, even amidst all this wretchedness, vanity still keeps its hold, which, while it softens their hardships, renders them infinitely

amusing. Perhaps this is rather too strong a picture, for there are some industrious exceptions; but so many of the settlers came out with high-raised and absurd expectations, with dreams never to be realized, but which might be prolonged by Cape brandy, that they found the temptation irresistible.

The sons of the first settlers form a body of men well calculated for a new country: hardy, inured to the climate, bold hunters, and unsaddened by old remembrances of another land. That they will succeed in rendering themselves comfortable, and in getting all the necessaries of life around them, I do not doubt, though they can never be rich, from the want of a sufficient market; but this is going beyond my beat, who do not affect to give general views; and leaving it to graver writers to draw conclusions, am content to furnish lightly-tinted sketches like the following.

I shall long remember a visit I paid to a strange being, whose general title was the Mad Poet, and who lived in a wild remote spot on

the banks of the Fish River. He received us —himself in rags, at the entrance of a miserable hovel, the walls and roof of which were, in many places, open to the weather. He apologized for Mrs. A. not being ready to see us; but in the mean time discussed the advantages of his situation, which gave every thing that life could require. I looked around, and found that life required only water-melons, for there appeared to be nothing else. At length, we were admitted into the house; and as the dressing-room was separated from us only by a ragged blanket, we heard the process of the toilette going forward. The lady entered with a thousand apologies for detaining us, which I fully excused, for the time had been well spent, and her appearance was admirable; a tarnished white satin spencer contrasting well with a face and bosom scorched by exposure to an African sun. "It is very strange," she observed, with an affected smile and lisp, "but indeed it always happens, when visitors come, Mr. A. and myself are in dishabille." "You

know, my dear," interrupted the husband, "that, with regard to myself, the fault was your's to-day; for I wished to put on my best breeches, and you would not let me." The world, with all its mad follies, was discussed; and we moralized most delightfully on the charms of a calm retirement, where the bountiful hand of Nature furnished every thing, and where the resources of intellect prevented life from stagnating. "My dear," said he, addressing a pretty nut-brown maid, "repeat to the gentleman the last verses that I wrote." "Do, my dear," added the mother. The child coloured deeply, and, I thought, seemed to feel for her parents, while she refused. We spoke of education, of the march of intellect, of music, when the lady informed me that she was teaching her children music, by making them play on the table, until an instrument could be procured.

To have withdrawn the veil from the eyes of this amusing couple, would have been to de-

prive them of their only happiness, and myself of a hearty laugh.

Pride amidst privation I should have respected; but this, in which the paltry affectations of society mingled with poverty and dirt, was a scene got up for all comers, who were expected to go away filled with admiration of their heroic firmness.

You will laugh, and remind me, that in days of old, when surrounded by the gay and the young, I affected the cynic, and exclaimed, "The rout is folly's circle," and was never more than half-civilized; and you will say that this is but a relapse to the ancient disease. But the cases are widely different; for then I knew a few who were indeed well worth the cultivating, and, though years have passed, whom I still think of and remember with pleasure; but, after wandering through a wild country, and wilder tribes, amidst all that is beautiful and savage, to raise the mind to a visionary state of excitement, who could bear to be at

once brought down to the lowest depth of vulgar pretension?

I enter not into the question of the comparative advantages of savage and civilized life, though there certainly are lonely feelings of a higher order raised amidst the deep solitudes of nature, than any that refinement can produce.

LETTER VI.

Excursions.—Sketches of the people.—Anecdotes from the Missionaries. — Line of route. — Mountains. — Rivers. — Scenery of the Country.—Wild animals.—Birds —Herds of cattle.—A travelling party.—Plan of a tour.—Incidents and adventures.—Pitch our tents.— Missionary establishment. — Kaffer Chiefs. — Manners and anecdotes. — Portraits. — School.—Language.—A dinner.—Kaffer hymn.—Use of the Missionaries.—Wild beasts.—Superstitions.— Singular rites. — A story. — Customs. — Anecdotes. — Elephant hunting.

In a former Letter, describing the natives that live on the eastern boundary of the Colony, I mentioned an excursion that I made with the Landdrost of Albany into Kafferland.

There are two opposite cases in which it is interesting to find the features of a country minutely described: when it is wholly unknown to us, for it then adds to our stock of geographical knowledge; and when it is well known, for we then trace again on the page the

route we once ourselves pursued, and as we read, recall a thousand minute circumstances; we pause in the account, and say, "We remember this," or, "We do not think the Author correct here;" and should we have been methodical, and not rattle-brained tourists, refer to our journals to refute, or to confirm.

The country we crossed in our excursion, for travels would be far too ambitious a name, holds a middle place, a debateable ground, between the unknown and the known: it belongs not to the first, for others have described it; and yet they are so few, that it awakens not the companionable interest of the second.

My description will therefore be brief; and I shall confine myself principally to sketches of the people and of their customs, to observations that I made on the route, and to anecdotes that I heard from the Missionaries.

Our general route was easterly: on our right lay the coast, which we sometimes approached, and between the hills caught openings of forest scenery, terminated by the dim blue line of the sea; behind us was the colony, and to the north

the Buffalo Mountains, backed by the Koloco and Chumnie ranges. The principal rivers we crossed were the Great Fish River, the Keiskamma, the Chilumni, the Buffalo, the Namaqua, the Acoon, the Goonovi, the Gualaka, and the Kei; all flowing to the sea. The general character of these streams (with the exception of the last,) is the same; the banks, which are thickly covered with trees, are steep, but not high, while the water looks almost black from the effect of the branches that bend over it. The trees are various, and some strikingly beautiful; the rich foliage of the wild fig, the plum, and that of the gnarled and twisted elsewood, are contrasted with the cold grey green of the bending willow; there also are to be seen the assegai and iron-wood, with many others, while the water's edge is fringed with tall, light, feathery-blossomed reeds, and with the glossy palm-leaves of the Kaffer coffee.

The country, in approaching the rivers, becomes hilly, and is then thickly covered with flowering shrubs; but in proceeding, the rider crosses vast grassy plains, over which the

mimosa is thinly scattered; and is warned of his vicinity to another stream, by the ground being broken into smooth undulating hills, which become bolder and steeper until he reaches its banks.

After the summer heats, whole regions have one general red-scorched hue, that fatigues the eye; and when that ceases, it is but to give place to large tracts over which the flame has swept, leaving them black and cheerless. This is sometimes the effect of chance, frequently of design, as it is the only method of clearing away the withered grass, that affords no nourishment, but which, on being removed, is replaced by fresh herbage. A single shower changes the whole face of nature, and the grass springs up with a quickness that, to one accustomed to the tardiness of European vegetation, is like magic. At night, too, the effect of the wide-spreading fire on the mountain's side is singularly magnificent.

In travelling through remote parts of the Colony, one of the strongest sources of interest

is to be found in the variety of wild animals, that, bursting through the bush, vanish with the quickness of light. Kafferland is strikingly deficient in this respect; for a hunting people quickly exhausts a country, and not even a small bird can rise from the high grass, within sight of a native, without being pursued, and brought down by the kirri, which he throws with unerring aim. Herds of cattle were the only quadrupeds which we met with on our route; and when they perceived the party at a distance, it was strange to see them come galloping and bounding, and playing round us, as if man were a welcome sight, and not a being to be dreaded.

Our party, formed of strangely mixed materials, mustered nineteen,—and seven Europeans; the Landdrost, the conductor of the expedition, being the chief. Then there were three fine young men, the sons of settlers, hardy, temperate, active, and such shots, that, I understood, they had for some years paid their father's farm-tax, by the destruction of the wild animals on

whose heads a reward was set. Then we had two Hottentot soldiers, drivers, servants, Kaffer attendants, and interpreters: there was a waggon containing a tent, and every thing, in the shape of creature comforts, that could minister to the pleasure of the travellers; we had sixteen riding horses, as many oxen for the waggon, and a flock of sheep.

Our order of march,—if order it can be called,—was this: the horsemen were generally some miles in advance, crossing the vast trackless flats, or diverging, as game or curiosity tempted them, while the waggon laboured on far behind, following the Kaffer guide, who strode before it with his free bold pace; and in the rear was a line composed of sheep, soldiers, and servants. We generally made an hour's halt in the heat of the day to rest the cattle; and if we reached a river's banks about sunset, pitched our tent there, and lighted our fires for the night.

The situation of some of our bivouacs was strikingly picturesque; that on the Keiskamma, I particularly remember for its beauty.

Our tent was pitched in a green valley on the banks of the river, from which the jungle appeared to have been cleared away by the hand of art; for, except in the direction of our approach, and in that of the ford, the bush grew thickly and luxuriantly around, and the blue smoke of our fires curled up amidst mimosa, jasmines, and many other scented shrubs. After halting, all hands were busily employed in pitching the tent, unyoking the oxen, collecting fuel, and forming an enclosure for the sheep; while some of the party rambled along the river's banks in search of water-fowl, and others assisted in preparing the dinner.

In the midst of our preparations a missionary waggon passed, whose inmates told us, that we had taken up a position that might be disturbed during the night by hippopotami, but we saw nothing of them; and early in the morning crossed the river, and proceeded to Wesleyville, the first establishment of the Missionaries of Kafferland.

The station is situated on a gentle hill that

rises above a branch of the Chilumni, and the small, white-washed cottages, perched on the green slope, have a pleasing air of quiet neatness. The scene we witnessed on our arrival was highly animated; for a number of the neighbouring tribe, hearing of our approach, had assembled; while the chief (Pato) and two of his brothers, Conguar and Kaama, were in full dress to receive us; and, in truth, it was not a little strange to see the three figures, one habited as a quarter-master-general, another as a field-officer of artillery, and the third as a lancer, standing amidst the dark and stately forms of their followers, while the comparison proved by no means favourable to military foppery.

The situation was to me so new and amusing, that I remained among them the greater part of the day, watching the new-comers, that were collecting from the kraals for miles around, as their dusky forms appeared and disappeared among the bright mimosas.

It was strange to have got beyond the empire

of gold and silver, and to find their power usurped by beads and buttons! and, still more strange, to find myself surrounded by men and women, as simple and as easily pleased as laughing, happy children. Great was the curiosity of the men, with regard to our guns, and their delight at seeing the practice, when an object was placed on a distant ant-hill, and the balls threw up the dust around it; while the women were not behindhand in their vocation,—coquetry and admiration of finery. I should greatly like to know whether any people have yet been discovered so rude, that the females cannot coquet; if so, they must be many grades below the Kaffer, among whom the art,—if it is not nature,—is by no means in a low state. There are parts of their system which, wishing to leave a favourable impression of my sable friends, I will not mention; but in the use of their black eyes, the most dangerous of weapons, they have little to learn: they are proud too of the tattooing on the breast and shoulders, and exhibit this disfigurement very liberally.

The manner in which the girls distinguished the incos (chiefs) of our party was singular: they examined the wristbands of the shirt; and if they were fine and white (which last they quickly ceased to be under their handling,) the point was settled.

Kaama, the youngest of the brother chiefs, I had seen in the Colony, where he was a general favourite, and where, from his almost polished manners, he was sometimes to be met with at civilized tables; and it was with no slight surprise that I have, on such occasions, observed him conform himself to the small proprieties of society, which he appeared to catch up instinctively. I visited his kraal, entered his hut, and was introduced to Nomguiny, his only wife; and not a little proud are the missionaries of his example, though I fear that he is a wavering proselyte to the system which they wish to introduce, as he frequently talks of taking another. Nomguiny was a very good specimen of a Kaffer woman; and Kaama owned that he had no excuse for increasing his num-

ber, as he believed she was perfectly correct. His mother made her appearance, and I thought that I had never seen so hag-like a picture of misery—blear-eyed, wrinkled, with shrivelled lips, and a skin that hung loose on her long form. This wretched decrepitude was in part owing to age, but more to suffering and to torture that she had undergone when young, on being accused by the rain-makers of witchcraft.

When I looked upon the tall and graceful young chief, wrapped in a tiger-skin mantle,—for he had quickly thrown off his lancer uniform, and was greatly improved by the exchange,—and at his wife, with her three sparkling-eyed children playing around her; and when I heard him say, in speaking of his hut, "Kaama's house poor," I could trace that his thoughts were far away, in the house where we had last met; that he felt humbled that a stranger should compare them; and I doubted the reality of that kindness which could give to the savage a glimpse at refinement and

luxuries, and then return him to his beehive-hut and simple pleasures.

We visited the school, where the little natives were learning to spell and read in Dutch and Kaffer, of which last language the missionaries are forming a written vocabulary,—rather a difficult undertaking, I should think, for many of their words are almost beyond European pronunciation, and may bid defiance to its spelling. Nor is this the only obstacle to their task, for it is no easy matter to explain to the simple natives the English word for which they require a corresponding Kaffer expression. In the word hypocrisy, so well understood in civilized countries, this difficulty was found; but at length the Kaffer caught the idea, and exclaimed, "Ah, to put on your wife's carosse when you work in the garden." I have already said, that the labour of the fields is confined to the women,—and so degrading an employment is it considered, that when a man wishes to assist, he disguises himself in the female garment. Ere we have done with

them, I fear their knowledge on the subject will be improved and enlarged.

We dined with the missionary, and found the three brothers at his table. They conducted themselves with great propriety; and I was entertained when proposing wine to Cobus Conguar,—a proposal which they are by no means slow at comprehending,—by hearing an uncontrollable laugh burst from the little Kaffer girl who was waiting behind my chair. It proceeded from Cobus's little daughter, Conky, who was greatly amused at seeing the ceremony.

On the following morning we were present at the missionary service; and to me there was something highly impressive, in hearing the song of praise, set to their native airs, come from those wild dark groups. There was one hymn that had been composed by a Kaffer, with which I was particularly pleased, and which I afterwards obtained; the four first words of each verse were repeated by a single bass voice; while all, males and females, joined

in the remainder. It perhaps owed much of its merit to the circumstances under which I heard it, and will be by you considered monotonous. I send it, however, at all risks.

THE KAFFER HYMN.

" Ulin guba inhulu siambata tina,
Ulodali bom' uadali pezula,
Umdala uadala idala izula,
Yebinza inquinquis zixeliela,
Utika umkula gozezulinè,
Yebinza inquinquis noziliméle,
Umze uakonana subiziele,
Umkokeli na sikokeli tina,
Uenze infaana zenza ga borni;
Imali inkula subiziele,
Wena, wena q'a ba inyaniza,
Wena, wena kaka linyaniza,
Wena, wena klati linyaniza:
Ulodali bom' uadali pezula
Umdala uadala idala izule."

TRANSLATION.

" He who is our mantle of comfort,
The giver of life, ancient on high,
He is the Creator of the heavens
And the ever-burning stars.
God is mighty in the heavens,
And whirls the stars around the sky.
We call on Him in His dwelling-place,
That He may be our mighty leader;
For He maketh the blind to see;
We adore Him as the only good;

For He alone is a sure defence;
He alone is a trusty shield;
He alone is our bush of refuge;
Even He, the giver of life on high,
Who is the Creator of the heavens."

The prayers were partly given in Dutch, and translated by a Kaffer, (who held the office of clerk,) and partly in Kaffer. I understood but little of them, perhaps as little as my dusky neighbours. This was the first Kaffer missionary institution I had seen. I afterwards visited three others, and think that there can exist but one feeling in regard to the kind and simple manners of the preachers,—of their hospitality and willingness to inform; though a doubt may arise in some minds, as to the practicability of obtaining any useful results, from an attempt to explain the mysteries of religion to those whose faculties are bounded by the severity of their condition, and who feel no higher interest than in the spoils of the chase, that are to relieve the necessities of the day. The humane, however, will wish well to their efforts; for they have been aimed at the over-

throw of some of the wild superstitions and cruel customs connected with witchcraft, which are common among the tribes; and I have reason to believe, that, within the influence of the missionary stations, the rain-maker and his incantations are losing ground.

I wish not to detract from the merit of the missionary, whose efforts I believe to be often useful, and always well meant, when I strip from their labours some of those showy appendages, on which declamation has exhausted itself. The missionary has been described as a man who has taken up the Cross, and, devoted to the service of his God, has renounced all that the worldly-minded seek; has turned his back on all the social endearments, and all the polished refinements of society, to traverse deserts infested by savage animals, and tribes still more savage.

This picture is somewhat overcharged; the missionaries that I saw had, by their own exertions, built convenient habitations for themselves and their followers, and apparently

lived in a comfortable manner, without luxuries and without wants. There are exceptions, but in general it may be said, that they are not of a class that would in their own country have ever known the refinements of life; and of its social enjoyments they are not deprived, for each station (I believe) contains three Europeans, with their wives and families. Nor are they shut out from communication with those they have left behind; for the Kaffer messenger each week visits the nearest frontier military post, and receives the letters, which are then forwarded to those more remote. I have, in my rides through the country, crossed the dusky figure, as he moved quickly forward on his return, and have looked upon him as the last link of the vast chain of social intercourse that binds the absent to their father-land.

With regard to the danger arising from wild beasts, nothing can be more erroneous than English opinions; the traveller passes over immense tracts, without seeing any living thing, save the timid antelopes; and if desirous of ex-

amining the fiercer animals in their native state, he must seek them in their haunts; and when found, the dread is rather on their side than on his. In my wanderings I have suddenly come on a night-fire among the rocks, and found the Hottentot, who had lighted it, wrapped in his sheepskin, and stretched, with his feet to the flame, in soundest slumber, while in the midnight waste no sound was heard, save the dreary howl of the prowling wolf.

I have already said, that I do not think the Kaffers cruel; but the path of the missionary has difficulties that it is unnecessary to exaggerate: he has to temper a zeal for religion, that must be strong, with a caution that does not frequently belong to it; for the people he is among are naturally suspicious of every thing that comes from a white man: he has to bear "that hope deferred that maketh the heart sick," when he is made to feel how little his efforts avail; when he sees year follow year, while the same wild superstitions continue to

hold power over minds that are shut to a milder faith.

Some of our party entered Pato's kraal in the dusk of the evening, and were witnesses to a ceremony performed by the rain-maker, in discovering a witch. The chief had been long sick, and the rain-maker was summoned, for the sickness of a chief is always the effect of witchcraft or of poison; and the tribe was in doubt and fear. When I entered, I found the women ranged in a semicircle, beating the large shields of the warriors, and shouting a melancholy monotonous air,

"To some dark being framed by their phantasy;"

but it appeared to me, that they liked not that a stranger should see their wild rites, for they ceased soon after our approach.

The belief in witchcraft is general throughout the country, and the punishments are dreadful. The rain-maker, after his ceremonies, fixes on some obnoxious individual,

possessed of a large quantity of cattle: no proof is necessary, no protestations of innocence avail: the wretch is fixed to the earth by a thong, carried round the ankles and wrists, which are fastened to stakes driven into the ground; burning stones are then placed on his body, and nests of the large black venomous ants broken on the scorched and wounded parts. In his agony he confesses to all that is demanded of him, and is then ordered to give up the power by which he worked evil. He gives up something,—any thing,—a string of beads, or an ornament, and is then tortured to death, or driven from the tribe a wanderer and a beggar.

I heard from one of the missionaries the following story:—

In Hinza's territory, a Kaffer, whose possessions excited envy and dislike, was accused of keeping a wolf, which, though confined during the day, roamed about the country at night, and destroyed the cattle. On this plea he was seized and deprived of every thing, half of the

cattle being taken by Hinza, while the other half were distributed among the councillors. The man was banished the country; and on leaving it, seized on the cattle of another, and carried them with him to Voosani, a neighbouring chief of Tambooki's. Hinza sent to complain of the robbery, to demand the cattle, and to inform the chief of the crime of the man, whom he had protected. The cattle were returned, and great horror expressed at the crime. The missionary, who told me the story, in speaking to Hinza on the subject, said, "You have plenty of cattle, why did you ruin the poor man?" When the chief turned to him with a peculiar smile, which marked that he was not deceived, and with a tone of mock seriousness said, "Yes, but it is a shocking thing, you know, to keep a witch wolf."

Kafferland suffers much from want of rain, and the tribes, that depend on their crops of Kaffer and Indian corn, die in a year of scarcity by hundreds. When this is threatened, the prophet, rain-maker, or doctor,—for he unites

the three,—becomes of importance, and is bribed by a present of oxen to procure rain. He promises it; the thunder-clouds are to burst within a certain time, and the rain is to pour down: if it comes not, he says that the cattle they sent him were poor, and the rain-spirit is displeased; larger cattle are sent, and again the prophet names a period before which their wishes will be gratified: should that time pass, he says, that nothing will avail, but a favourite ox of the chief's. There is a long hesitation in yielding this, while so much time is gained; but it is given, and another term is mentioned. The doctor is now at the end of his subterfuges; and should the rain not come, names the man or woman who has frustrated the effect of his incantations, and the wretch is killed to save the credit of the rain-maker.

I had from a missionary the following account of some of the Kaffer superstitions, several of which almost approach religion, which they are said to be without.

A Kaffer selects, as his guardian, the spirit of

some former chief or friend, invokes him on all occasions of difficulty, thanks him on all escapes from danger, sacrifices to him part of the ox that he kills, part of the game that he takes; and in harvest-time scatters a portion of the grain as an offering. In crossing a flooded ford he calls upon him; and when the string that fastens the ornaments of his carosse is loose, and he discovers it in time to save them, he ascribes to his kind spirit that the thought of looking had occurred to him.

When the kraal is struck by lightning, the site is either deserted, or an ox burnt on the spot, or buried beneath it, as an offering to the incensed spirit of the kraal, or to *Uhlanga*, the spirit of thunder.

The apparition of the dead, *Shulanga*, is supposed at times to haunt a kraal, when his dying wishes have not been complied with, and an ox is sacrificed to appease it; and a man rushes from the habitations, in wild pursuit of the dark shadowy form.

On our route we passed through several

villages, where the ceremony of circumcision had been performed. The boys were brought out to us; their appearance was strange and hideous, their bodies being whitewashed, and their heads and waists encircled by leaves of the palm, called the Kaffer coffee. They performed a wild kind of dance, the principal motion of which was a whirl, while the women sang a monotonous air, and kept beating an extended ox-hide, which they stood round. We afterwards, in travelling on, met several of the whitewashed urchins, and observed that the Kaffers ordered them to hold out their hands, and struck them with the kirri: these boys are considered unclean, or sacred, (I know not which), for a time, and are either kept in a hut separated from those of the tribe, or banished for a period, at the expiration of which they are ranked as men.

When the wife of a Kaffer dies, he becomes unclean, leaves the kraal, and lives in the bush for a certain time; and on his return, puts on a fresh carosse, burning that in which he

had mourned. On the death of a Chief, the ceremony is, I believe, similar, and the mourning longer.

We remarked on the banks of the Kei River, some of those heaps of stones which are to be met with on the hills near the Fish River, and which are generally said to be thus marked by the Kaffers, as the spots where European soldiers were killed. I inquired particularly regarding them, and was informed by our guides, that when a Kaffer felt weary, he had but to add a stone to the heap to regain fresh vigour. I asked how the first stone came there; and only heard that their fathers and their grandfathers had done it, and they did it. These heaps are by the Kaffers called *Vivani.*

The following anecdotes, characteristic of Kaffer manners, I had from one of the missionaries.

On the death-bed of the old Chief, in whose country Wesleyville is situated, Pato was named his successor, in preference to Conguar, his elder brother, who was appointed Regent

until Pato should be old enough to reign. When that period arrived, Conguar was by no means pleased to be stripped of all power; and on receiving, or fancying, a slight from his younger brother, retired to a distant part of the country. After the lapse of a considerable period, Pato got into some difficulties with a neighbouring and powerful Chief, and his councillors recommended that Conguar should be consulted. Messengers were sent to require his presence, who returned with this answer: —"My father's house was supported by three posts; there were two, thin and weak, in front, and a strong one behind them—now the weakest took it into its head, that it could support the house without the assistance of the stouter one; and now let it try." The second weak post alluded to another brother.

The tradition of the rise of Pato's family is curious. It was in the reign of Tshio, six generations back, (for the Kaffers go no farther,) that their ancestor Quaani was a great soldier and favourite; and to him and one other the execution of the Chief's orders was intrusted:

these orders were often tyrannical,—the destruction of whole kraals, the seizing of cattle, and the massacre of their wretched owners,—and Quaani evaded them, by sending some of the cattle to the Chief, and concealing the families in a far distant part of the country, remote and shut in by mountains. This had continued for some years, when suspicion arose, and the other captain asked him whether he always obeyed the commands of his Chief; and on finding that he did not, they quarrelled, and Quaani left the kraal of Tshio, and told his enemy that he went to gather his people together. He was absent for many days, when one night Tshio's favourite queen was surprised by his entering her hut, and giving her the following instructions. "At the dawn of day go to Tshio, and then look to the hills, and you will see my warriors;" and the queen followed his instructions; and as she looked towards the hill, she exclaimed, "What is it that I see?—is it mimosa bushes? they grew not there yesterday;"—and she looked again, and cried out, "that they were armed men come,

to surprise them;" and Tshio was sorely disheartened; and then Quaani came down with a hundred young men, with their shields and assegais, and their war plumes, and Quaani and his warriors kneeled before the Chief, and laid their arms at his feet, and then followed the aged men and the aged women and the children and cattle; and Quaani said to Tshio, "These are the people you ordered me to destroy; behold, I have saved them;" and Tshio took unto himself a portion of the people and of the cattle, and gave the remainder to Quaani, and bestowed on him a territory on the sea-coast of seventy miles in length, and twelve in breadth, and said unto him, "I adopt you as a son; you are now of the Amachoui, (tribe of the Chief,) and should a son of mine raise his assegai against you, raise yours against him, for you are his equal."

All the higher chiefs of Kafferland trace their descent from Toguh, Hinza's being the most direct.

When one of the missionaries, some years since, was returning from a mission to Hinza, he stopped a night in the kraal of a neighbouring tribe; and on being asked the news by the Kaffer in whose hut he slept, told the interpreter to give it. The story lasted a long time; and at the end of each sentence, the listener gave an assenting sound; and at the close, the interpreter exclaimed, "Thus said Hinza." "Thus said Hinza," repeated the Kaffer.—"Thus said Hinza," rejoined the interpreter. "True descendant from Toguh," said the Kaffer.—"True descendant from Toguh," repeated the interpreter. "Great lord of this earth," said the Kaffer.—"Great lord of this earth," echoed the interpreter.

It almost seems a baseness inherent in his nature, that man should crouch to man. In countries long enervated by luxury, and that have long bowed to the artificial distinctions of society, it is every where seen, and seen without surprise; for wealth has the power to draw around it all that awes the vulgar mind into

submission,—the palace, the liveried menials, and the sounding title; but here, where the hut of a Chief differs in nothing from that of his follower—where his dress, his arms are nearly the same—where he has no possessions that it is not in the power of his subjects to acquire, and no superiority of talents, or of strength, to excite their respect—where, to a stranger's eye, he appears almost on a level with his attendants—for, when crowded about their fire, the pipe goes round from mouth to mouth, on the most familiar terms, and enters the *royal* lips, moist from those of his soldier—yet does he receive the most abject obedience; and when an inferior Kaffer meets him, he is frequently saluted thus:—"This day I see a true Chief, and I am his dog." But a truce to reflections; and after some account of the Kaffer's method of destroying the elephant, and two more missionary anecdotes, with which this letter will finish, I shall bid farewell to Wesleyville, and pursue our journey in the next.

I had heard so much of the native mode of killing the elephant, and of the perseverance and daring exhibited, that I had long wished for an opportunity of witnessing the hunt; but something had always occurred to prevent, or to delay it. It had been described to me as lasting for days—sometimes for weeks—the huge monster, whose strength might appear to bid defiance to any weapon receiving its impetus from the arm of man, sinking at length under the wearying effect of long pursuit, and the weakness attendant on loss of blood flowing from innumerable petty wounds.

It is only in the chase and in war that a stranger can see the energies of the natives drawn out: in general, grouped around the fire, or beneath the shade of trees, their character—the effect of their climate—is that of listless apathy and sluggish indifference, now and then broken in upon by something that excites an interest, and arouses looks and glances savagely intelligent. But in the pursuit of the larger animals, all their powers of action and enterprise

are elicited; their arts of cunning circumvention—that knowledge which teaches them when to enlarge the circle of enemies that has been drawn around their victim—when to diminish it—to approach, and to pour their assegais in upon him. Then, too, is exhibited all the vigour of their fine forms in the attack, all its speed in their flight, when the maddened beast turns on his assailants; and at such times all that speed is frequently insufficient to save them. I longed to watch their noiseless, stealthy pace, and their dark-figures, now half concealed in the underwood, now creeping through tangled thickets, and now bounding forward, while the rocky hollows echo their shrill scream of triumph; the skill with which, taking advantage of every bush, rock, or inequality of ground, they crouch from view, keeping below the wind to prevent discovery from the animal's accurate sense of smell; and when all these arts fail, and the tortured beast rushes forward in reckless despair, the wild effect produced by their firing the high dry grass

and brushwood, and retiring in safety behind its dazzling flame. There was, in all this, much to pique my curiosity, and still more in the strange feeling of superstitious awe with which they are said to approach their prostrate prey, and to exculpate themselves of any blame in his death, by declaring to him gravely, that the thing was entirely the effect of accident, not design; while, to atone for the offence, or to deprive him of all fancied power,* they cut off the trunk and solemnly inter it, pronouncing repeatedly, during the operation, "The elephant is a great lord, and the trunk is his hand."

I received the following account of a Kaffer elephant-hunt from a missionary who witnessed it.

"The elephant, after receiving many wounds, plunged into one of the sea-cow holes in the Chilumni river; the place was deep, but nar-

* In this extraordinary custom a resemblance may be traced to one mentioned by Shaw in his Travels, of the Arabs burning the head of the Hyena, lest it should be made the means of some charm of evil influence.

row; and the Kaffers stood on the banks, throwing their assegais with certainty, until his huge back was stuck all over with them, and the water dyed with his blood. At length, a Kaffer made his appearance with a gun, and firing, struck him on the shoulder; the beast gave a tremendous scream, and rushed to the shore to face the hunters, who yielded him a clear path; and the elephant, to whom the last wound had carried death, turned to regain the water. At this moment I saw (said the narrator) one of the hunters, who had but a few minutes before leaped out of his path, return to the attack, jump up, and catch him by the tail, plunging, at the same time, an assegai into his flank; the elephant regained the river and died. "I never," observed the missionary, "saw so strongly contrasted, the daring and the insignificance of man."

When a Kaffer returned to his own country from Cape Town, to which he had been taken by an English officer, and, full of the strange things he had seen, told his tale to the dark

group around him, describing the wonders of a ship, which he called "a waggon that moved upon the waters, and that never *uitspan'd*," (unyoked,) and many other marvels; he was greeted at the close of each story, when he expected applause, by the unanimous comment, "*That 's a lie!*"—a very common fate with travellers.

LETTER VII.

Wesleyville.—Its delightful Scenery.—Second and Third Missionary Stations.—Interpreters and Guide.—Anecdotes of Elephants.—Strange Scene.—Hottentot Eloquence.—Grave Argument.—Artifice.—Criticism and Humour.—Games.—Evening Amusements.—Shooting Hippopotami.—The River Kei.—Trying Adventure.—The Incagolo.—Kaffer Chief and his Staff.—Anecdotes.

On leaving Wesleyville, our party was increased by one of the brother chiefs, Conguar, and four of his attendants, Faarni, Chiqua, Ikey, and Claa-Claa; the last of whom joined us as we passed through a kraal near the station, where his wives had been preparing him for his departure, by colouring his body with red clay, and dressing his hair in the most finished Kaffer manner, giving it the appearance of a number of red peas covering the head. He came bounding towards us, a proud and joyous creature, at being selected to attend the Landdrost, and to visit Hinza.

I looked back from the last hill from which it was visible, on Wesleyville, with its humble white cottages crowning the gentle slope, and shaded by their bright mimosas; on its fields and gardens that lay near the stream, whose waters flowed so calmly and coolly beneath the trees; and I thought that I had never beheld a scene so calculated for rest and happiness. Such are the thoughts that arise on viewing many a spot which we are borne quickly past on life's swift current, and on which we look back with regret and longings. To destroy the phantasy, it would only be necessary to grant the wish; for we are then quickly made to feel,

> "How ill the scene that offers rest,
> And heart that cannot rest, agree."

The feeling was but of a moment; and when I looked forward, I was ready to exclaim, "No, I would not exchange the excitement of my present situation, with that airy outline of beautiful mountains, and those dusky wild groups around me, for all that life could offer of refinement and tranquillity."

We visited a second missionary station, situated on a hill, named by the Kaffers, on account of its beauty, *Omkamgeza*,—rays of light; but which, when it became Christian, had to be re-named, and has, with a slight sacrifice of taste, been called Mount Coke;—and then proceeded to a third, which is yet in its infancy, on the Buffalo River. This was the last in the direction of our journey; though a negociation was going forward to establish one in Hinza's country, which has, I believe, proved successful.

Our new companions, among whom I should have named two interpreters and a guide, were at once useful and highly amusing. I have watched them when striding quickly before us: they beguiled the way with stories, accompanied by much action and emphasis, one speaker frequently continuing for an hour, and the word being then taken up by another. I longed to know the subject of their tales: but an interpreter is, in general, but a bungling medium of communication; and I could dis-

cover little, which was the more to be regretted, as one, the history of an elephant-hunting adventure, which was explained to me, was full of interest. The speaker, when engaged in the hunt, had been pursued so closely by the animal, that the sole means of escape left to him, was creeping into the cleft formed by a sloping rock and the surface of the ground. To this retreat the enraged monster pursued him; and the Kaffer described, with the wildest action, his closely clinging to the rock, while the beast was attempting to coil his trunk round his body and to draw him out. He had lived to tell it, from so completely filling the extremity of the hollow, that no opening was left for the trunk to act; and he laughed, and showed his white teeth, as he described the baffled animal's retiring.

I have sat round their night-fires and listened to themes of discourse, to me strange and interesting,—for there is a pleasure in knowing how a people, whose habits of life differ so widely from our own, think and feel; but I

am aware that much with which I was entertained, might to you appear trifling, and that the interest was greatly owing to situation—to the fire blazing fitfully bright, and throwing its dusky glow on the surrounding listeners, who seemed to live on the words of the speaker, while he, with his wild gestures, was at times brought out in the strongest contrast of light and shade; added to the feeling, that I was listening to the actors, and in the very scene of their adventures. So imperfectly, however, did I, through the interpreter, keep the thread of their narratives, and so much should I have to fill up from my own conjectures, that it will be more prudent, perhaps, to confine myself to some of their arguments and games, which I comprehended better; and first, let me describe one of the former that was carried on between our Kaffer guide, who spoke a little Dutch, and the two Cape-corps soldiers of our party.

The Hottentots were eloquent on the theme of the Kaffer depredations, and insisted on the great service and improvement that would

follow their being organized, and having serjeants, and corporals, and officers appointed; indeed, they would never be good for any thing until it took place. The Kaffer laughed, owned that there were some *Schelms* among them; but then there were wicked people in all countries:—he could not deny that at times they stole cattle. "And why should you steal," interrupted the soldier, "when you have plenty of your own?" "We are so fond of our own cattle, that we prefer killing those of our neighbours," calmly answered the Kaffer; "and then it is done so cleverly; they creep along the ground on their bellies; I wonder their bellies are not sore with it." I forget how the argument ended, but it excited great laughter round the fire; and the Kaffer kept up the fight with much grave humour.

I was greatly diverted too by the criticism on our party, which the interpreter translated for me. Of the Landdrost, from whom came all good gifts,—beads, buttons, knives, and tinder-boxes,—they spoke highly; of another, they said

he had done pretty well, he had shot two Korhaans, and three Ha-di-das (birds of the country); then a third had shot two ducks—that was not bad; but a fourth had fired very often and killed nothing. Then there was one who sometimes carried a gun, but never fired; but then he took *baalas* (drawings) of them all, and it was something to write down every body: this last observation was on myself; and if I may consider the many finger-prints with which my sketch-book was stained, as marks of admiration, I had every reason to be satisfied.

Then there was not a little good-natured triumph among them, when, after repeated attempts, we failed in giving the true pronunciation to their names; which was, in truth, no easy thing, many of their words commencing with a *click*, a kind of sound in the throat, that mingles with the syllable.

One of them, Ikey, had a jest, on which he much valued himself, exhibiting, in an amusing manner with his hands, the superiority of their mode of travelling over ours. At first, the

race seemed in favour of the horse, the hand that represented him starting off at an easy canter, but quickly halted, and began to kick and snort, then went on for a time, again stopped, and again proceeded; and the Kaffer imitated the horse's panting, and finished by making him knock up; while the other hand, denoting the walker, continued the same even pace to the journey's end.

There was a game among them, which they called *playing cards*, and which, from its name, I should think belongs to the Hottentots rather than to the Kaffers. I have seen them engaged in this amusement, matched against each other, and wondered at the excitement it produced.

One of the party had a small piece of twig, or grass, which he continued quickly to shift from one hand to another, while his opponent might at any moment order him to stop, and had then to name which hand contained it; while the other, should the guess have been correct, attempted to throw it into the opposite one. You will say that this must have been

very stupid; but you would not have thought so could you have witnessed the wild gesticulations, the strange singing, and the bursts of laughter, with which it was accompanied.

I remember watching an argument that was going forward among our attendant Kaffers, round their night-fire, on the banks of the Namaqua river: the subject I could not quite understand, but the principal speaker was Claa-Claa, and his speaking was most energetic. He sneered at and ridiculed the argument of his opponent at one time; and then, suddenly changing into a serious and impassioned tone, pointed to the stars that shone brightly above us, and traced with his finely-formed arm the course of the moon in the heavens. The dispute was probably something connected with time; for the moon is their night-watch, and their measure for distance; and more than once in my rambles, when asking the direction to any point, and how long I should be in reaching it, I have been answered, "You will be there when the moon is down."

Such were the amusements of our evenings, after partaking of a plentiful dinner that was laid out in the tent, the excellence of which a long day's ride had fully prepared us to appreciate. On these occasions, Conguar was always a guest, and most ample justice did he do to the fare; the only thing I ever observed him decline, and that he did invariably, was milk, which being procured from inferior Kaffers, he, as a Chief, would have been degraded in drinking.

The tent and waggon formed the sleeping apartments of the party; and at the first dawn of day, all was in motion; some preparing breakfast, others striking the tent, yoking the oxen, and saddling the horses. This excursion made me fully enter into the charms of a gipsy life, at least in a climate so fine as that of Southern Africa.

Thus day followed day without any accident occurring to impede our progress, which was necessarily slow, to allow the waggon to keep up with us; and we made frequent halts, and

watched it heavily winding down some steep hill, or descending the bank of a river, by a path which had been opened through trees and bushes for its passage. It was curious too to mark, as we passed on, the natives, who, perceiving the party from a distance, were seen speeding towards us, their tall forms now visible on the hills, now lost in the thick underwood of the hollows; nor must I forget the strange riders that we sometimes encountered on oxen,* and whose singular appearance had a very startling effect on our horses; while in the evening, the people from the adjoining kraals flocked around us fearlessly, bringing baskets of sweet and sour milk for sale, and converting our bivouac into a petty fair.

After ten days of this kind of travelling, we reached the Kei River, the scenery, as we ap-

* The oxen are broken and tamed for riding when young, by piercing the cartilage that separates the nostrils, and thrusting through the hole a piece of stick of about eight inches in length and one in diameter; to each end of this a leathern thong is fastened, which serves as a bridle.

The motion of the ox is, I am told, easy and pleasant, but I never tried it.

proached, becoming more wild and picturesque, and ending in steep hills and cliffs immediately above it: here, from the difficulty of the ground, it was considered safe to leave the waggon, and to proceed to Hinza's kraal, a distance of about thirty miles, on horseback. A messenger was sent forward to notify our approach; and the day that must elapse before his return, it was determined to devote to shooting the hippopotami, with which the river abounds. In the morning, guided by the natives, we moved off to a part of the stream where good sport was promised us. The Kaffers said it was no distance; but I found it was more than two hours' riding; and long before we caught a view of the Kei, I heard the firing of some of the party, who had preceded us, echoing amidst the lonely hills. At length, on reaching the ridge of a height, I saw the river far below me, winding its hidden course through the mountains. It was impossible to take my horse down the rocky steep on whose brink we stood; so, fastening him to a tree, I left him,

and proceeded with the Kaffers, tracing, as we went, the large foot-prints of the sea-cows, which wander far up among the hills, grazing in the calm moonlight nights. The firing still continued; and, on reaching the party, I found them lining the side, busily employed at a deep part of the river, called, by the natives, a sea-cow hole, where several of these huge animals then were.

On the first arrival of two of our companions, who had pushed on before the rest, a hippopotamus was found basking on the bank; but their impatience was such, that they threw away their fire, and the monster plunged into the water, much frightened, but uninjured, not giving them an opportunity to repeat their salute. The animals had now become wary; and when obliged to raise their noses above the surface to take breath, they exposed as little of their ugly heads as possible, and did not remain longer than was absolutely necessary. Several of our party, were good shots, and the sport continued for some hours, but the balls whizzed

about to no purpose, at least to no *visible* purpose, though there was scarcely one that had not hit the beasts; and Conguar was perfectly certain that two of his shots had been successful.

The Kei is by much the largest river I have seen in Southern Africa, and bears a character distinct from all those we had crossed in our course. There are few trees on its banks, which are covered with large grey rocks, that lie at the bases of the high cliffs, of which they once formed a part, while between these cliffs and the river, in its summer state, in some places there is a narrow line of ground, broken by rocks, and covered with rich clustering vegetation; while in others, the water sweeps close under high, naked precipices, and is darkened by the shadows which they cast. Where every feature of a scene is vast, I have frequently observed, that the eye cannot measure its vastness, until something, with which it is intimately acquainted, furnishes a scale; and this was strikingly illustrated by the diminutive appearance of some water-fowl that skimmed

over the surface of the river, rendering the huge grey rocks on its banks, and the towering cliffs that enclosed it, tremendous.

All around bore the stamp of the destroying power of the wintry floods, when the African river, so contemptible in summer, becomes a wild torrent, carrying down the largest trees in the rush of its dark-brown waters. I felt it to be a scene that left upon the mind a stern and desolate impression.

In returning, I found that my horse had broken his bridle, and escaped from the tree to which I had left him fastened, while our party had moved on, and I was left with a young Kaffer, to catch him and to follow. In the first, we succeeded; but the bridle was destroyed, and I had no choice but to walk to our bivouac, a weary distance, through hollows of almost impervious bush, through the hot rocky beds of streams containing not one drop of water; and now mounting hills, only again to descend into kloofs, from which we had again to mount. I cannot boast myself a good

walker; and I never envied any thing more than the untamed vigour of my young guide, as he lightly bounded before me over bush and rock. I see his figure now, when, thoroughly tired, I stretched myself at the foot of a steep hill, and he stood looking down on me, beguiling the time, by now humming a Kaffer song, and now whistling an air. I see his speaking eyes, when, with strange yet graceful gestures, he tried to make his language intelligible, and repeated again and again, *amber*—get on, and then went to the extent of his Dutch in *loup*, bearing the same meaning; while he pointed in the direction of our distant tent, marking, by the movement of his wrist, the number of hills and hollows that we had to cross; and then to the declining sun, to tell that night was approaching, and we had no time to lose.

There are situations in which the thinking being will feel his inferiority to the uncultivated child of nature,—in which he will doubt whether his firmest opinions are any thing

better than well sounding, yet narrow prejudices; his most laborious inquiries, more stable than the watery circle, that, as it extends, is weakened and quickly lost, and that every useful truth lies in the first simple principles of nature, which he has left to wander among artificial theories and idle speculation; in which he will feel that all the acquirements he has prided himself on, would be well exchanged for a frame that knows not fatigue and yields not to privation—for an eye that ranges over the wide and lonely waste or barren mountain side, and discovers—where to a common observer all bears one uniform, unvarying appearance—particular objects to serve as landmarks during the day; and, when the gloomy night comes on, moves fearlessly forward, guided by the stars that look down on the dim and shadowy hills.

Some such thoughts as these passed through my mind, as I lay stretched on the hill-side with my young, wondering, and impatient Kaffer standing near me; and I was roused

from them by hearing my companions halloo from a distant ridge they had gained. We moved on zigzagging up a hill that I thought would never terminate, and descended on the other side into a wooded ravine, where I found a tree whose fruit looked and smelt most temptingly. Some of the wild fruits of the country are poisonous; and I therefore dared not eat, until the example had been given by my guide. The Incagolo (for that is the Kaffer name of the fruit,) grows on a dark-leafed thorn, of about twenty feet in height, and resembles a small apricot in appearance; it is juicy, and its flavour is a clean, cool acid, while its seed, of which it contains seven or eight, is something like the pip of the pomegranate. It appears peculiar to the hills on the Kei River; for the Kaffers we had brought with us knew it not, and called it poison; in consequence of which, my companions, as I found on reaching the tent, had all passed it. On my producing some, however, it was generally voted delicious; though I rather think that heat and thirst

added not a little to its merit, and doubt whether it would take so high a place among other fruits, as it did then in our opinions. It is strange that the missionaries, to whom I mentioned it, were ignorant of it, and that, until introduced by us, the Incagolo was wholly unknown in the Colony.

When sitting round our dinner-table, after the sea-cow shooting excursion, I gave, to some inquiry that Conguar addressed to me, a quizzing explanation; and his countenance and reply quickly showed that he did not understand being laughed at; for he gravely said—"When you have asked me any thing, I have spoken the truth;" and on joining the Kaffer fire, I heard him addressing a long speech to his attendants, with which, from his eyes being frequently turned to me with a sullen expression, I judged I was in some way connected; nor was I mistaken, as I found from the interpreter, that it was a dissertation on the effeminacy that could not bear fatigue. But I must introduce you more particularly to my sable friends,

—to Faani, whom we called master of the horse, from his generally having the charge of the Chief's steed,—to Ikey and Chiqua, the personal attendants or soldiers, and to Claa-Claa his councillor, and relate some anecdotes of the last, who was far the most intelligent.

In proceeding on our journey, one morning, he had been mounted on one of the Landdrost's horses, which, unaccustomed to Kaffer riding, started off at a gallop, which its rider was unable to control. Onward he went; we saw him descend the dry rocky bed of a stream, and the horse rise on the other side without Claa-Claa. I rode up, expecting to find him seriously hurt; he had risen, and was rubbing his back and elbow, while he appeared indifferent to a blow on his head; which was by no means trifling, for a ledge of rock bore the red clay-mark where it had struck: a more quiet horse was given him, and we proceeded; and at the end of the day's journey I was laughing at him for not keeping his seat better, when he

asked me, through the interpreter,—"Why I laughed when I should cry?"

There was a gentleness about this tall, finely formed young Kaffer that was very engaging. One evening I asked him to extract some thorns from my hand, the Kaffers always carrying about with them an iron bodkin for that purpose: the operation was performed very carefully; and afterwards, at the end of each day's ride, he took my hands in his, and minutely examined them. Conguar, our attendant chief, was a great favourite, and I must give some of his dry characteristic speeches. One night that our bivouac was surrounded by a distant horde of Kaffers, over whom he had no control, he was asked whether our things were safe, and replied—"They have told me they will take nothing; but I cannot see their hearts."

On my inquiring from him which were the most powerful chiefs in Kafferland, he replied, "Hinza,"—a long pause,—"Then Gaika—then St'lamby;" he stopped.—"And your own fa-

mily comes next, I suppose."—"We are but as dogs to Hinza,—as the dust is to my foot."

One of our party was attempting to explain to him, that the moon shining above us was a world like the one on which we stood; and he listened attentively, and calmly observed when the speaker had ceased;—"I will not say, that what you have told me is not so, but has any one been up to see it?"

In reply to some observation of his, I said, "Conguar, I wonder at this from you, who live so near Mr. S—— the missionary; I am sure he never does so."—"Oh, Mr. S—— knows God, and I don't know him yet."

In the morning we were to leave our station and proceed to Hinza's kraal; and much of the night was passed by the Kaffers in preparation for the great event. They anointed themselves, or, in vulgar language, smeared their bodies over with grease, and then rubbed them with red clay; their ornaments were brightened, and their heads received no slight share of attention. All this certainly did not improve their

appearance in my eyes; but that was of no consequence, for they were evidently satisfied in their own; and that the process is useful, I have little doubt, by preventing the skin cracking from exposure to heat, and being in some degree a defence against cold; and even I think that after it has been on a few days, and is well rubbed in, the effect is good, as it diffuses a general dark red tinge over the whole body, with about the degree of polish you see on a bronzé statue. A fine Kaffer gives the idea of the human animal in the highest possible condition. I observed that Conguar, who wore a jacket and trowsers during the journey, never rubbed himself with clay, but with our dress affected our habits.

Having described our preparations, I will finish this letter, and in my next present you to Hinza, and return you to the Colony.

LETTER VIII.

Ford the river Kei.—Hinza's Kraal.—Savage and Civilized Regrets.—A Character.—Mark of Hospitality.—Adventure.—A Curious Proposal.— Namarké. — More Anecdotes.— Caffrarian Ladies.—Presents.—Departure from Hinza's Kraal.—Horsemanship.—Hinza.—Chaka.—Value of Wives.—Conguar's Tribe.—A Kaffer's Dog.—Anecdote.—Kaffer Chief's Character.— Society.—Warfare.—Majestic Scenery.—The Campanero.—Solitudes.—Motives for travelling.—Hottentot Guides.—Climate.—Animals.

LEAVING our waggon, tent, and Hottentots at the station, we forded the Kei, and ascended, with some difficulty, the steep rocky hills that skirted it; and after a fatiguing day to both men and horses, not from the distance, but the rugged nature of the country, reached Hinza's kraal. On our arrival, we found that the chief was absent at one of his places on the coast; but a messenger was immediately dispatched to him, while a hut was appropriated for our accommodation, which I, accompanied by an interpreter, went to examine, and found its own-

ers employed in removing their small stock of household furniture, consisting of a mat, a small rough earthen vessel, two baskets, and a spoon. I amused myself by taking the little woman's fat round hand in mine, and expressing, with an appearance of deep interest, the regret I felt at putting her to so much inconvenience. I never saw such a simple expression of astonishment as her eyes betrayed, as my speech, of which she of course understood not one word, continued; and when it ceased, she turned to the interpreter, whose attempt to find Kaffer words to explain the hollow no-meanings of civilized regrets must have been rich, could I but have comprehended it; and when he had performed his part in the farce, she merely said, "Yes, it is very unpleasant;" while a person of polished habits would have said—"that it was no inconvenience, that it was a pleasure," while she would have atoned for the want of sincerity in her words by a due portion in her wishes, for in them I should infallibly have been sent to the devil.

I examined the kraal, which might contain about fifty huts, and differed in nothing from many others we had passed through, nor was the much talked of chief of thirty thousand subjects, who arrived early the following morning, distinguished in any respect from other chiefs. He rose as we approached, and came forward from a group of his captains, held out his hand, welcomed and asked us to stay; and when we declined his invitation, said, "that it made his heart sore to part with us." This was irresistible, and we consented to remain a day. I was amused by a touch of his pride on our first interview: after shaking hands with the Europeans of our party, he pointed to Conguar, who stood in the full dress of an artillery officer, which he had brought with him for the occasion; and turning to an attendant, said in a tone of affected ignorance, "Whom have we here?" and on being told, observed, "How fine he is!" and turned haughtily away.

Hinza wore very few ornaments, and had nothing to distinguish him, except his tiger-

skin mantle: in person he was tall and stout, and his countenance for a Kaffer was handsome, while his manner was a strange mixture of rough jest and overbearing pretension.

The Landdrost had come amply provided with presents, which he gave to the Chief and his wives and daughters. There were hatchets, saws, knives, beads, buttons, tinder-boxes, and brass-wire for bracelets; never had the kraal seen such a day,—all was delight and wonder.

Hinza, on receiving a scarlet robe, threw it over his broad shoulders, and seemed infinitely pleased with his appearance: his remark too on the occasion, was truly savage; "I will wear this when I go to my cattle kraal, and the oxen will come out to look at me, and I shall then be able to count how many I have;" and surveying himself again, he added, "I shall now be as fine as Conguar."

He laid it by, and resumed his tiger-skin carosse; and I thought how strangely extremes meet, when the highest effort of artificial luxury, the regal robe, differs but little in form

from the fur mantle with which the savage covers his sun-scorched body.

An ox was killed for us, of which the Chief and principal captains, or influential men, (to use the missionary phrase,) partook largely; and in the evening, while sitting round the fire, Hinza requested that we would send the Kaffers away, as he had something to impart; nor were we a little surprised to find him commence on the subject of his queens. He said, "that it was a fine thing to have nine wives, as they were of use in working in the fields; but then it was a difficult thing to keep them in any kind of order, and that he feared strange improprieties happened; that he had taken the cattle of the offenders, and banished them; but much that was incorrect, he believed, still went on." We tried to comfort the *royal sufferer*, by telling him that his case was by no means singular; that it was the same every where, even with those who had but one; while we could not understand why he should impart his griefs to us; but this was in some mea-

sure explained, when, on retiring to our sleeping hut, two of his wives and two of his daughters crept into it: Hinza probably reasoning, that what he could not keep from his subjects, he might as well give to his friends. The ladies crouched near the door of the hut, feeling all the awkwardness of their situation; and appeared glad to escape, when through our interpreter we dismissed them.

On the following morning, after the distribution of more presents, in which the little woman whose hut we occupied was not forgotten, our horses were saddled, and the tribe was crowding round us, taking leave, when I asked, experimentally, the price of one of Hinza's daughters, a lively-looking black damsel of about sixteen, who appeared to have no objection to accompanying our party; she was valued at twenty cows, a moderate price for a princess. I told her to go for her wardrobe; but she said she had nothing but the carosse on her back and the cap on her head. I then said, that there was a spare horse for her; but she preferred

walking. It was delightful to see so much humility joined to such rank. But it was in another tribe that I saw the lady who made the deepest impression: Namarké was the daughter of a great soldier in St'lamby's country, and would really have been considered handsome in any part of the world, for her features were high, her form tall and striking; and, could Goldsmith have seen her, he would never have written so foul a libel on the Kaffer ladies, whom he terms "the hideous females of Caffraria." Her dress too was very becoming: her cap, a band of leather fastened round the upper part of the head, was ornamented with strings of beads, white and blue, which had a pleasing effect, and gave relief to her dark countenance, over which they hung; her neck was covered with necklaces of garnet-coloured beads and tigers' claws; and her small and beautiful ankles were defined and encircled by a single string of small blue beads: to complete the description, her carosse hung in ample and pliable folds round her person; and the Kaffer

girl was far more completely covered than ball-room ladies were in my younger days.

In the morning, when we had struck our tent, and were making preparations for departure, Namarké again made her appearance. Pleased with the admiration expressed, she had bestowed much pains on her toilette, and succeeded in making herself hideous with red clay; but on being told that the change was by no means to our taste, she retired behind a group of Kaffers, rubbed it off, and came forward again. Presents had been liberally distributed by the Landdrost, and all were in perfectly good humour; the horses were saddled, the oxen yoked to the waggon, when I, through the interpreter, made my proposal to the lady:—I told her that I thought her very pretty, and asked if she thought me so. She said, "Yes;" never did courtship commence better. I then asked her if she would go with me; when her father, who was standing close, answered, that I must give her heaps of beads. I, in lover phrase, said, that I thought her worth all the beads in

the world. "But what will you give me?" asked the soldier; and on my replying,—"It is not you, but your daughter, I want;" Namarké exhibited her ivories to perfection; and the Kaffer, slapping me on the back with all the familiarity of a father-in-law, said, "That is very good, but I must have fifty cows:—you are a traveller," he added, "and have not got them with you; but come back, and we will talk about it." I gave her my hand to kiss, on which she left the red clay marks of her lips, and thus ended the courtship.

Not yet quite hopeless, I told Conguar, that I wished much to marry one of the daughters of his people, and that the requisite qualifications were moral rectitude and a small mouth; at which the Kaffer gravely shook his head in despair.

One or two more anecdotes, and I have done with the fair sex. I was riding through a kraal, attended by my guide, and had stopped to talk with a group of Kaffers, when one of the women, who was sitting down, expressed a

wish to go into my country, where there were fine clothes. "Nothing easier," I said; "tell her to jump upon my horse." When this was repeated to her, she laughed, rolled herself from side to side, to express what her motion would be on the horse; and finished by falling on the ground, and bending her arm to convey the idea of its being broken.

I had exhausted my beads and buttons, when, on approaching another group of Kaffer women, I was assailed on all hands with "Barseela, Barseela!" I took out my powder-horn, and pretended to drink from it; on which one of the women put back her head, and opened her capacious mouth, which I half filled; and taking a sprinkle, scattered it on the fire, not a little amused at the alarm and dispersion of the circle, and at the expression of fear on the countenance of the favoured lady, which was truly grand.

Hinza, after having been loaded with gifts, asked for a horse, saying that he had but one, which was old and lame; and then offered to

accompany us to our waggon, evidently in the hope of receiving more presents: he was, in truth, a most unkingly beggar, and somewhat addicted to lying, which was exemplified by his ordering out seven horses to mount himself and attendants, while we saw as many more in one of his cattle enclosures that we passed.

When mounted in a troop, their appearance is singularly wild, and savagely warlike: they ride without saddles or stirrups; which they do not seem to require, for their seat is not wanting in firmness and ease. With their bundle of assegais in one hand, and their light bridle in the other, their carosses sometimes thrown over their shoulders, sometimes hanging low on the horse's side, they canter boldly on over the rough rocky ground, their dark forms now concealed in the shadowy ravine, now fording the rushing river; then at moments indistinctly seen among the trees on its banks, and again becoming clearly visible on emerging from them to ascend the steep hills that rise above it.

Hinza had evidently heard too much of white men, to be quite comfortable in their presence. He declined the invitation given him to visit Graham's Town; and when sitting at table with us, seemed distrustful and fearful of eating; at one time muttered something about poison, and then pleaded, as an excuse for his want of appetite, "that his belly was sore:" a few glasses of wine, however, overcame his suspicions; and he observed, with an appearance of satisfaction; "that they warmed his inside, and did his belly good."

I do not remember that any thing came from his Majesty worth recounting, except, indeed, that he praised one of his queens very highly, and said, "that she had a dove-like neck;" whether to show us what we had lost in making so cold a return to his liberality, I know not. On being asked what he would do should the fierce Chaka invade his country, his speech was by no means warlike: "He should ask the assistance of the English." There is a strong horror throughout Kafferland at this dreaded name,

caused by those whom he has driven from their country, having taken refuge there. I saw many of the fugitives, who are called *Fingos*, wanderers; and on my once mentioning Chaka before them, a woman exclaimed, "That is the wolf that destroys us!"

In the morning Hinza and his followers took leave, and we turned towards the Colony; the route, in returning, differing but little from that by which we had come. Our party had received an addition in the person of a woman of Conguar's tribe, whose husband, a follower of Hinza's, had been unable to pay her stipulated price. He had, it seems, been permitted to take her, on the promise of sending the cattle; and failing, she was now to be restored. The poor creature appeared much distressed, keeping alone, and sitting at a distance from the fire, around which all the others were enjoying themselves.

Barrow, I think, says, that when he was in Kafferland, the price of a wife was one ox; if so, the commodity is raised: this woman, who was

of the lower order, and by no means beautiful, was valued at eight. Conguar told us, that one of his, a daughter of St'lamby, had stood him in forty, while I was asked fifty. It is pleasant and gratifying to see the sex taking their true station and value in society.

In savage life, where brute strength governs, woman is a slave; among polished people, where smiling beauty is all-powerful, a queen.

In our homeward journey, little occurred to describe: the same lively and amusing scene attended our evening bivouacs, and the natives every where appeared animated by kind and trusting feelings towards us; while I remarked, that many whom we had seen before, came again to greet us on our return; but there was one incident that I must not omit.

We had rode on before the waggon and attendants, and had dismounted, and turned our horses out under the shade of the trees, on the banks of the Goonovi River, when a Hottentot came up to report, that the sheep had been attacked by a Kaffer's dog, which had destroyed

one; that the dog had been shot, and that he had told the owner that he must make good the loss of the sheep, and come before the Landdrost. An old man approached, attended by two very handsome young Kaffers; he wiped the perspiration from his dark brow, while his troubled eye went round the circle to discover its superior, and he then spoke; and if energy of action may be trusted, his pleading must have been truly eloquent. He urged, that his dogs had never seen sheep before, and therefore did not know them from deer; that he did not set them on, and was sorry that they had killed the animal; but he could not make the loss good, for he had nothing—he was a beggar;—the brother of Hinza had seized his cattle—his all—and had left him little better than a *Fingo* (a wanderer).

The Landdrost told him that he did not wish him to make the loss good, and that had he known it, his dog should not have been shot, and then dismissed the old man with a present.

We had now visited the missionary stations

and the principal chiefs, Hinza, — St'lamby, Duchany, and Pato, two of whom I have described; and of the two others, at whose kraals we did not halt, I have nothing to tell; and now, on approaching the boundary of the settlement, prepared to make a long day's ride, and to push on before the waggon, on whose slow movements we were no longer dependent. Previous to leaving the party, the Landdrost asked each of our Kaffer attendants what he wished for; and after having been so boundless in his gifts on the route, it was fortunate, that enough was left to satisfy them: the last of the beads, buttons, knives, tinder-boxes, and brass wire, were distributed; and I never saw people more grateful or more happy. One of the guides burst into tears on receiving his share; while another, on being asked what present he wanted, said, that he had a gun, and could a little powder be given him: he received seven charges, and I never saw so lively an expression of delight: he bent again and again to kiss the hand of the donor; and then said, raising his arm and point-

ing,—"The sea-cow that lives at the mouth of the river shall never sleep again." I watched his proud elastic step, as he quitted us, until his dark form was lost in the shadowy hollow of a ravine.

We entered the Colony after an absence of three weeks,—a period to me so full of new and varied interests, that I resolved on paying my sable friends another visit: but you are probably ready to exclaim, "Something too much of this;" and as I have no wish to "bestow all my tediousness upon your honour," I will spare you the recital of my excursions.

You will perhaps think that, blinded by the novelty and the imaginative excitement of situation, I have drawn too favourable a picture of savage life:—it may be so; but I have described what I saw in the tone of feeling which such scenes were calculated to excite. Some tra- [illegible] have pourtrayed the same people as covetous, inquisitive, cunning, and selfish: that they possess an equal allowance of these amiable qualities, which form so large a proportion of

the composition of poor human nature, with others, I do not doubt; but it is only because they want the smiling polish—that in artificial society throws its thin veil over them,—that they appear to have more. For my part, I did not look out for faults. I was in health—happy and excited,—willing to make every circumstance minister to laughter and amusement, whether it came in the shape of a flirtation with one of the fair sex, (the Kaffer language, by the by, can have no distinction resembling ours, of the sexes, when they are equally black,) or in a contest of quizzing round the night-fires of our attendants.

There are few men, I think, who would not find some source of interest in crossing the region I have described. To those whose ardent gaze upon the loveliness of earth and sky is a passion—and there are such,—who can look upon nature, forgetting that man exists,—who can wander among the hushed and mighty solitudes of savage scenery, where all is

motionless, save the cloud shadows crossing the mountain's side,—who possess a feeling—

> "That has no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrow'd from the eye,"

this country has high delight in store.

If human nature be the favourite study, where can its springs be better traced, than among the simple and the unsophisticated? or, if the traveller possesses taste to admire the noblest of forms, that of man, he may ramble far ere he finds it in such perfection. I have watched a group of Kaffers, as they stood around me in easy, graceful attitudes, and marked their soft pleasing manners and mild eyes, and wondered that they could ever be savage; when the discourse suddenly turned on war, and a Kaffer was asked to show their manner of attacking an enemy. The expression in a moment changed; the eye assumed a vindictive glare; his lip the stern curve of vengeance; and throwing from him his carosse, and grasping the assegai firmly in his

right hand, he bounded impetuously forward, crouched, as if to avoid the weapon of his foe, and then again rushed on with every muscle of his fine form clearly developed; and when his time had arrived, brandishing his weapon, he raised it to a horizontal position, gave it a quivering motion ere it left his hand, and sent it whizzing through the air. But it is to the visionary in his dreaming mood,—that mood which, like the wizard's glass, can mingle the past, the present, and the future; can blend the real with the imaginary,—that every scene, removed from the dull hacknied common-places of life, teems with bright or mournful imagery. Here his thoughts may find ample range, and fear no interruption. To him, what a tale would the Bell-bird* tell! It was during a halt

* I have called it the Bell-bird, from finding a bird, whose note is similar, described under that name in "Waterton's Wanderings." "The Campanero of the Spaniards, or Bell-bird of the English, has a note loud and clear like the sound of a bell, and may be heard at the distance of three miles. In the midst of these extensive wilds, generally on the dried top of an ancient Mora, almost out of your reach, you will see the Campanero; and even when the meridian sun has shut in silence the mouths of almost the whole of animated nature, the Cam-

that my companion and myself made in the rich valley through which the Goonovi winds its way, that I first heard that melancholy sound—almost the only sound that breaks the silence of those mighty solitudes. "Listen," said my companion; "did you not hear a church bell?" I smiled, and repeated,

> "The sound of the church-going bell
> These valleys and rocks never heard,
> Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
> Or smiled when a Sabbath appear'd."

We paused, listened, and I was ready to laugh at the strange power of imagination, when it came again; and I now distinctly heard it low and solemn, like a distant grave-knell.

Amidst the eternal and noblest forms of nature, the lofty mountains that seemed to inclose us, the high grey cliffs that flung their cold shadows over half the valley, the silent shady river, darkened by the gloomy foliage on

panero still cheers the forest. You hear his toll, and then a pause for a minute; then another toll, and then a pause again; and then a toll, and again a pause; then he is silent for six or eight minutes, and then another toll, and so on."—This bird is a native of Guiana.

its banks, the hushed and dreamy stillness, save when the distant echo-like chime, touched on the ear, were deeply impressive, and the awed feelings were bowed down before the spirit of solitude, and the scene became religion, and the hollow surrounded by grey crags, where we rested, a temple of the desert.

It has been well observed, that though men give many reasons for travelling, yet that they all merge in one overwhelming motive,—the having exhausted the simple pleasures that could excite in life's early and better day. The child is happy, for each day, each hour produces novelty; and men wander in foreign lands, again to renew the fresh feelings of childhood; and those feelings are more strongly excited in proportion as the scenes we gaze upon are farther removed from all that we have ever before seen. It is this which to me gives a pleasure that I can never describe, to my lonely rambles over those trackless wastes, crossed only by the wandering hordes, or the wild animals. In other lands, we think of man and of

his works, by which he has frequently marred that which was beautiful: here all is nature, and the traveller passes under ancient trees, whose grey arms meet above his head, in immense forests that have never echoed to the axe: he fords the rivers, where bridges were never heard of: he threads the paths through the thick-tangled jungle, which have been made by the elephants in their constant migrations through a country which they have possessed for ages. At sunset he lights his night-fire, and, wrapped in his fur-cloak, sleeps secure from the prowling wolf, whose melancholy howl is heard around, "making night hideous." He rises at break of day, fresh as the air that he has breathed, when grass and flower are wet with glittering dew; takes a slight breakfast prepared by his attendant Hottentot, who rolls up his cloak, saddles the horses, looks carefully to his gun, and then, with unerring instinct, leads the way over hills, through glens, and across rivers, pointing out the distant wild animals as they burst through

the open spaces between the clumps of bush, or bound the level line of the vast plains; the stately koodo, with its spiral horns; the harte-beest, that gallops away, and then proudly turns round to gaze on the intruder; the bush-buck, that rises just before your horse's feet; and the beautiful spring-buck, with its bounding motion—spreading the snowy fur of its back, as it flies with a speed that laughs at the hunter.

It is noon, and beneath the sun's scorching influence both men and horses bend. There is not a single cloud through the deep blue sky to mitigate its power—not a breath of air to stir a leaf; and the small ponds on which the traveller relies, are dry—without one drop of moisture, even at their lowest depths—only parched mud to tell where water had been; and again the horses are urged on over sere, red-scorched grass, that contains no nourishment, with drooping ears and heavy stumbling pace, on, on for miles; while the Hottentot, who knows every pond in the wild country, shakes his head, and his practised eye looks round in vain; while the weary beasts are still spurred forward.

Oh then to reach the desert stream, so clear that the rocky channel over which it flows is visible to its utmost depth, and to quench the burning thirst, and to bathe the fevered brow, and to lie at length stretched on the cool herbage, while the horses feed around! The scene is now before me. How proudly the scarped side of that weather-stained rock rises perpendicularly from the water's edge on the far bank, while the river flows clear and black and deep at its foot! and close by me, those slender branches of the delicate acacia, and that high bed of light feathery reeds, and those large palm-leaves of glossiest green, droop over it: while above, the grey arms of many trees meet in fantastic curves; and all around is dim and gloomy, save when a gleam of sunshine finds its way through the matted foliage, where leaves of various hues mingle, and falls glimmering on the steep rock or calm water.

I admit the interest of travelling amidst the home views of England, and that soft kind feelings are excited by its thatched cottages peeping out like nests from among their

showery blossomed orchards; their fresh meadows, hedge-rows, shadowy lanes, and quiet field paths; by the humble spire or grey ivied tower of the village church, with its green hillocks of death and low head-stones around it, higher and better thoughts arise—our early thoughts—and in this wild country, the remembrance comes over my spirit at times, like a passing odour from some humble bed of flowers, breathing a sweet influence.

I have wandered too in other lands, where the ruins scattered around, each with its traditionary tale, withdraw the mind from the present scene, and throw it upon the world of the past; and the gazer is lost in a dream of chivalry, of high untainted honour, ardent devotion and purest love—the bright drapery that romance has thrown around the past, in mockery of the present: until aroused from the vision by some disgusting interruption of vice, vulgarity or selfishness:—by something that breaks in upon the phantasy, and tells him of things that are.

In these vast boundless tracts there are no

associations connected with the past: mankind is in its infancy: but there is nothing in their simple manners to offend. The savage is never vulgar: his armed figure encircled by his dogs; his graceful and free-born motions when in pursuit of game; his frank manner and bold approach, on perceiving the white stranger who is traversing his country,—are all noble and in character and keeping with the surrounding region,—with the distant range of snow-capped mountains,—with the shadowy kloof, the sheltered rivers, and the abrupt cliffs that tower above in strange and fanciful shapes, —with the bare and sun-scorched rocks, in whose crevices patches of rich verdure find nourishment,—with the high natural grass and flowery shrubs through which the rider makes his way, while they exhale sweetness to him, from the very pressure which destroys their beauty:— with all that is spirit-stirring and magnificent in the wild and desert scenery,

> "Untouch'd as yet by any meaner hand,
> Than His who made it."

LETTER IX.

Sources of Interest.—Elephant Hunting.—Portrait of a Hunter.—Account of a Week's Excursion.—Adventures.—An Ambush.—A Night in the Wilderness.—Costume of the Hunters.—Narrow Escape.—A Rhinoceros.—The Buffalo.—More Sport.—Return to our Bivouac.—Anecdotes of Elephants.—Of the Hunter.—Of Skipper.

You tell me that my descriptions of the scenery and customs of this wild country have an interest for you, who pass life in civilized sameness. Almost every country has some sources of amusement and information peculiar to itself, and this remote frontier, in Africa, is by no means without them; and they are much to my taste, for I seek excitement from situations that most would shun, which you, who know me to be no sportsman, will allow, when I tell you that I have just returned from a week's elephant-shooting. My companion and

myself had appointed to meet the elephant-hunter; who promised us certain sport in the dusky hills through which the great Fish River flows, —a country thickly covered with bush, and given up to the wild animals that infest it.

After wandering half the day amidst its lonely scenery, we heard a distant shot and saw the smoke rise, and shortly afterwards the hunter joined us, a thin, spare, bony man, formed for activity, whose sun-scorched countenance and eye of habitual watchfulness bore that expression so frequently to be traced among poachers. His manner was bold and open, as one who felt that in such situations the petty distinctions of society ceased. His quick grey eye glanced from beneath the broad rim of the boor's hat; his powder-horn hung from a black leathern buckled shoulder-belt, to which his pouch was attached: he was mounted on an active, well-formed, small horse, and followed by nine dogs of every variety of the cur and lurcher, that came limping after him, for they had suffered severely from an attack on a

wild hog, a side of which hung at the hunter's saddle. From him we heard that he had neither seen elephants nor any trace of them; and after searching for some hours, and consulting with his two attendant Hottentots, we took up our bivouac on the banks of the Fish River, gave our horses to the servants, unpacked our provisions, spread our beds of sheepskin, and lighted our fires. We did full justice to a dinner of which the flesh of the wild hog formed a principal portion, and my hungry judgment pronounced it superior to any pork I had ever tasted. There were two fires:—round one sat the hunter, a little boy whom he was training to his dangerous trade, my companion, and myself; round the other, the two Hottentot shooters, and our two attendants. Dinner was at last over, and we reclined on our sheepskins, and listened to the adventures of the hunter, to which I must despair of imparting the interest which he gave to them—for you cannot hear them as I heard them, in a wild soli-

tude, and in the calm beauty of an African night.

D—— the shooter was an English settler, and did not conceal that he had been a smuggler among the Kaffers. After the trade was permitted, he followed it at Fort Wiltshire, and lost in the regular traffic what he had gained by the illicit; he not only lost what he possessed, but became involved, and, to recover himself, entered on the wild life of an elephant-hunter. When pursuing his first dangerous trade, his stock of beads, he said, had been frequently seized by the Kaffers, and his life threatened,—for they knew well that the life of the smuggler was not protected—that Gaika had once taken every thing from him, and was about to give him up to the English troops; — "When, you know," observed the Kaffer calmly, "you will be hanged;" and that he was only saved by the intervention of another chief, Duchany, who prevailed on Gaika to let him escape. He gave

an instance of honourable feeling in this chief, with whom he had trafficked for cattle, which were intercepted by another horde, before he could reach the Colony, and from whom Duchany recovered and restored them.

"I have had many escapes among elephants," he added, "and among Kaffers, but I never felt as I did on the night in which my companion was killed. We were bringing a venture of cattle into the settlement, when we were surrounded by Kaffers; we fled different ways,—and I wandered on foot, unarmed and alone; night was coming on, when, on suddenly turning a rock, I saw three armed Kaffers within twenty yards of me; they had seized some of the cattle, and the bleeding body of my companion lay by them. I turned, without a hope of escape, and almost felt, in thought, the assegai whizzing into my back. Some time after this escape I was taken, through the fool-hardiness of my companion; for we saw the Cape Corps patrol, and might have secured our safety by the speed of our horses, leaving our

cattle behind, had he not prevailed on me to stop and bribe the serjeant. "Now, it is no easy thing," said D——, "to bribe a man who has twenty others watching him; so we were seized, taken to Graham's Town, brought to trial,—the court was divided in opinion, and we got off."

The night was wearing away: stretched on the sheepskin carosses, and wrapped in my horseman's cloak, I felt drowsiness coming over me; the fire blazed fitfully before my eyes, the hunter's story became less intelligible, his words half mingled with my dream, and then ceased. After some hours I awoke; our night-fires had burnt low; I looked up, and saw a thousand stars shining through the dark, shadowy boughs; I looked around, my companions were fast asleep; and the dogs, after the fatigues of the day, were slumbering near the embers, which threw a gloomy light on their half-defined bony forms:—I listened, and heard but the river's rush, on whose banks we had bivouaked.

Our first day's search had been vain, but the morning found us ready and sanguine; and after breakfast we started off on foot, each bearing a large elephant-gun on his shoulder. The hunter had changed his dress, and now appeared in a dark-blue linen shirt, loose on the arms, and fastened closely round his bare and sinewy throat; trowsers of the same colour, supported by a waist-belt; a yellow silk handkerchief bound tightly round his head, in Malay fashion; his powder-horn and pouch hung at his side, suspended from his shoulder-belt. This dress was calculated to set off his spare form to advantage; and though plain-featured, there was in his keen worn look, a something that impressed—the expression that belongs to the wanderer over the mountains; to one whose life is a succession of dangers. The little boy, slightly but finely formed, with a fair face, and light curled hair, and a blue eye, that in woman would have been beautiful, struck me as a figure that Westall would have delighted

in, as he bounded lightly forward beneath the weight of his gun.

But Skipper, one of the Hottentots, was far the most singular figure of the group; his large hat, with its round raised top, and strangely formed brim, throwing a dark shadow over his dusky visage; his deeply sunken eyes, his high cheek-bones, his mustache large and black; then his dress,—his trowsers tucked up to the knee, showing bare legs that defied thorns; one shoulder-belt, from which the pouch and powder-horn were suspended, and another supporting his hatchet for cutting out the tusks, and his bag for holding the wild honey. His jacket too of many-coloured patches, "that seemed to show variety of wretchedness;" here, however, it was but seeming, for Skipper was one of the boldest and most successful shooters in the country; but his gains, while they lasted, went only to keep the canteen in a roar, for he never could be persuaded to purchase cattle or acquire property. Methinks I see the extraordinary old

man now before me, coolly shaking the ashes from the large pipe, while the elephants are feeding within a dozen yards of him:—another Hottentot, my companion, and myself, completed the party.

The country we were traversing was singularly wild,—savage nature unreclaimed,—no blue smoke amidst the dark-green hills and shadowy hollows told of an habitation; even the roads are the work of the elephant. Man has never appeared in those tremendous solitudes, save as a destroyer. All was still, yet at intervals there came upon the ear the distant sound of a passing bell, heavy and slow like the death-toll; all again was still, and again the bell-bird's note came borne upon the wind: we never seemed to approach it, but that low, melancholy, distant dreamlike sound, still continued at times to haunt us like an omen of evil.

We threaded the elephant paths with a swift silent pace, over hills and through ravines, until, from having been long unaccustomed to walking in this riding country, I began, greatly

to the surprise of the hunter, to show symptoms of fatigue. "We shall soon be among the elephants," he said, "and then we can sit down and watch them." Forward we went—now in shadow, and now in light, as we wound through the high bush; the light now glancing on the strange head-gear of the leading Hottentot, now touching the yellow handkerchief that bound the hunter's head; now the blue one, that shadowed the fair brow of the boy, and now running in a line along the muzzles of the large guns; then, again, they were lost in the gloom of some dark descent, or rocky ravine.

We had frequently traced the mighty footprints of the elephants; from which the Hottentots told us when the animals had been there. "This is three days old,"—"This is last night." It was curious to observe the marks stamped in the mud around the small ponds, of animals that left their haunts at night to drink. The misshapen *spoor* of the elephant; that of the rhinoceros, resembling three horses'

hoofs; the buffalo, the wolf, the timid and various antelopes, and the baboon, were all clearly to be traced.

The African sun of mid-day now poured all its fire upon us; and it was with difficulty I could carry my gun, and the far-searching eyes of the hunters in vain looked around.

The only animals we had seen, were three buffaloes that rushed down the side of the hill close to us, and disappeared in the deep hollow below. We had passed in our search several bodies of elephants, their bones bleached by sun and shower, showing through the black shroud-like shrivelled skin, and at one place the skeleton of a rhinoceros lay close to that of its mighty enemy.

The search was becoming hopeless, when the leader pointed to a distant hill; there was a consultation, in which it was decided that a troop of elephants was passing over it. I looked, and could see nothing. But now we went on with fresh vigour, and gained the hill opposite to that on which they were; we halted and watch-

ed; a few words passed between the hunter and Skipper, and we descended silently the ravine that divided us. Again they whispered, —marked from what point the light breeze came; and we commenced the steep ascent in a direction that the wind might come from the animals to us; for we were now so near them, that their quick scent would have discovered us. Skipper led, while we followed in Indian file, threading a narrow rocky path, which skirted one bank of a small hollow, while the huge beasts were feeding on the opposite one. The leader halted, the hunter gave my companion and myself lighted sticks, and whispered directions to fire the bush and grass, and to retreat, in the event of the animals charging. It was a strange feeling to find myself within twenty yards of creatures whose forward movement would have been destruction; but they stood browsing on the bushes, and flapping their large ears, pictures of indolent security. We were taking our stations when we heard a shot, and then another, and of the

eight elephants, seven fled. We went forward to see the effect of the shots. Skipper's had carried death with it; the elephant had fallen, but rose again. I never heard any thing like its groans; he again fell, and we went up to him; the ball had entered behind the shoulder and reached the heart.

In looking at the mighty monster, I could not help saying, "Poor beast! and were it not for these ivory tusks, you might live happy and unmolested, and they appear given but for your destruction, for of what use are they?"—"Defence," answered my companion.—"No," said the hunter; "for the most fierce and dangerous among them is a breed that the Dutch call Koeskops, and they have no tusks." We cut off his tail, in token of triumph; and then followed the troop, that had fled down the hill: we saw them crossing the ravine, and traced their downward course by the destruction and uprooting of every thing that had impeded it: branches were strewed around; and the large palm-like euphorbias,

so common in these wild regions, were broken like twigs. In our pursuit, we crossed the lairs of the buffalo and the elephant, and gained the ravine; when I, who had walked full twenty-four miles over the roughest ground, with a gun that weighed twenty pounds, found it impossible to keep up with my more active companions; and seating myself on the ground, told the hunter to go and leave me; and on reaching the bivouac, to send my Hottentot and horse."—"It is impossible," he replied; "it will be a dark night; and even in the day, no one would find you here."—"It is of no consequence; I do not wish to spoil your sport; but I can go no farther;" and I stretched myself on the ground, indifferent to the result. "Were a rhinoceros to come down, I think you would find your legs."—"No; nothing could make me mount that hill." There was a consultation which I scarcely heard, and it was resolved that the little boy should remain with me; and that when I had rested, we should ascend the hill; lighting fires as we went, to mark our

course. The remainder of the party followed the elephants.

In half an hour I again took my gun, which had been changed for one that would scarcely fire, and began to ascend the hill by an elephant path;—the valley we had just left, and the side of the hill, were thickly covered with high dark bush,—on my right so close, as to prevent our seeing any object in that direction. We were slowly rising the ascent, when I heard the heavy gallop of a large animal approaching: my little companion was at some distance from me, blowing a lighted stick! "Listen," I said: the boy's eyes looked wild, and he fled from the sound; while I ran up the hill, not doubting that it was a rhinoceros; the heavy tramp was close to me, and I scarcely saw a large dark animal burst through the bush within a few yards of me, in the spot I had just quitted, and in the very path I was following. I did not stop; for, from the glimpse I caught, I believed it to be a rhinoceros: my young companion fired the bush, which I heard crackling,

and in a few minutes came up to me. "What a narrow escape!" he said. "What was it?—the rhinoceros?" "Did you not see it close to you?—it turned from the lighted bush." It was certainly a situation of danger, for the boldest hunter dreads and shuns this savage animal, and troops of lions have been known to fly before him; yet without affecting any particular courage, I trusted rather to my heels than my gun, which, as the event turned out, was fortunate; for when I attempted afterwards to fire, it snapped three times; I do not remember that I felt much fear; nor do I believe that, under similar circumstances, fear is natural;—there is no time for it; every energy is employed in escape. In a gale at sea, on board a small coasting brig, amidst the wild winds and waves of the Cape, though there was probably not one-twentieth part of the real danger, I have felt much more, for there I was a useless being, and no exertions of my own would avail, and memory and thought had time to be busy.

We at length gained the summit of the hill,

and saw the elephants traversing the one before us, their huge backs showing high above the bush; we heard our companions fire, and saw the animals rush away; and one charging towards us: we fired the bush and grass around us, and stood in a circle of flame; we listened, but could hear nothing; and proceeded lighting the bush as we passed, and tracing the route of the elephant, and the point at which he had been checked by the fire. The effect of the shots, we afterwards heard, was the death of a large female elephant, that fell with ten balls in her, each ball a death; but she stood heaving her back in agony, while her young calf went round and moved under her, covered with the blood of its mother. 'Tis savage work!

We found on our route a small pond, or rather puddle, but never was any thing more welcome! and yet when I think of it, the thirst must have been indeed extreme that would stoop to drink it; the water had been trodden into mud by the elephants, and we were forced to suck it almost through closed

teeth. It was the vilest abomination that ever went down my throat; and yet it refreshed me. We continued our course; my young attendant trusting much to the hunter's promise, that he would watch the line of our fires and join us; but I had less faith in it, for we were now far distant from each other, and the sun was fast sinking, and the surrounding mountains assuming a darker and darker hue. My little companion lighted the bush and dry grass around, and fired repeatedly to tell where we were; but there was no answering shot.

The sun sunk, but our fires only blazed the brighter. It was, in truth, a sight of no common beauty to see the fire catch the dry green moss that hangs on the withered branches, and envelope the bush in wreaths of light and fantastic flame, while the volumes of smoke, calmly floating on the clear sky, assumed the rich hues of fire. Dark night came on, and with it the heavy dew that prevented the bush and grass from igniting; and the young boy's

spirit, that had been so high during the day, fell amidst the surrounding gloom, and he still fired and hallooed with the faint hope of having his halloo returned; and he began to speak of being destroyed by the surrounding elephants. I tried to laugh him out of his fears. We collected dried wood for our night-fire, and agreed to watch and sleep until daybreak. I took the first five hours' watch, and was pleased to hear, from the deep, regular breathing of my young companion, that sleep and fatigue had overcome his terrors.

There was no moon, but the stars shone in brightness and in beauty on a dark blue sky. I listened, and at times caught wild, remote sounds—the nameless sounds of night. Who that has passed a night in savage solitudes, has not felt how distinct its sounds are from those of day,—has not discovered a voice and a language in the night-wind as it moaned by, different from the rush of any wind on which the sun ever shone,—like spirit-warnings from the past? I listened, and could imagine, in the

distant booming, hollow noises, that hundreds of elephants were crossing the hills; and again all was still as death: and then would come the wild melancholy howl of the wolf, and its short whoop, the next nearer than the first; and then, by sending a brighter flame from the fire, all again would be hushed; and then the stillness was interrupted by the croak of the night-raven, as it sailed down the ravine, catching the scent of the dead elephant; that ceased, and I heaped more dry wood upon the fire, until it threw up its bright flame gleaming with an indistinct and lurid light on the surrounding bushes. Then came a strange noise, as of some animal that was approaching us; it came nearer, and roused my little companion, who said it was the hyena with its hideous laugh and chatter—the most wild, unnatural sound that breaks the silence of night in those tremendous solitudes. The morning-star rose over the dark brow of the mountain—the first signs of day followed. We took our guns and lighted sticks from the fire, and left our bivouac, rather anxious to join

our companions, and to break a fast of nearly four-and-twenty hours.

In walking on, I told the young hunter that I was sorry my knocking-up had brought him into a situation of danger, and caused his passing a hungry and uncomfortable night; that I felt greatly obliged to him, and was desirous of making some return.—"Would such a thing be of any use to him?"—"No."—I named another, that I thought might be acceptable.—"No."—I, laughing, said, "Every one has some want; you are not, I suppose, exempt; what can I give you?"—"Nothing," was his reply, in a tone of apathy. On our route, we found, from the recent spoor, that the elephants and buffaloes had been around us, and that we probably owed our safety to our fire.

On reaching our station, I found the hunters absent; and my companion told me that they had gone in a new direction, and that we were to take up a fresh bivouac, and then join in the search for sport. This last part of the arrangement, I must own, I was not

particularly anxious about; for having satisfied my hunger, and bathed, I stretched myself beneath the shadow of the trees, and slept most deliciously. The hunters did not return till the evening; and my companion, a devoted sportsman, I thought appeared pleased that they had seen nothing. Our night-fires were again formed, and our dinner again discussed with admirable appetite. Stretched on the sheepskins, I gave an account of my adventure, and finished it by saying, "While you, I suppose, were greatly amused last night in thinking of our situation?"—"No, I was far from easy," replied D——, "and your meeting with the rhinoceros might have been a very serious one; for it is the most savage beast in the country, and dreads nothing except the elephant." He asked whether it had come towards us grunting, and rooting up the turf with his horn; and on my replying that, as far as I could tell, from the slight glimpse I caught of him, it was not so, and that I only heard his heavy tramp, he said,

"Then it could not have been seeking you, but had probably been frightened by the elephants crossing the ravine.—There is," he said, "an old chief, who is known among the Kaffers for an act of desperate courage, or rather madness:—a hunting party was out, when a rhinoceros started from the bush close to them, so close that the Kaffer sprang upon his back. The monster rushed through the bushes, and ploughed up the ground with his horn, snorted with rage, and did every thing to unseat his wild rider. In galloping on, the bushes tore the carosse from the Kaffer's back, and the rhinoceros turned upon it, and, while tearing it, the rider leapt from him, and escaped into the thick underwood." When fired on, even when badly wounded, they rush forward; and flame, which turns other animals, has then no effect on them. The buffalo also charges impetuously forward when fired upon; but is less dangerous, as he keeps his head close to the ground; and if the hunter jumps into a bush, and is raised ever so little above him, he is

safe. The common mode of attacking the buffalo is with dogs, and firing on him when surrounded and engaged with them.

In the course of the night conversation, I observed that D—— held the Dutch cautious mode of hunting the elephant in high contempt—their firing from a distance, and keeping near their horses. He was himself noted for coolness and courage, and appeared to despise all safe and prudent measures.

The night-fire of the Hottentots was near our own; and I remarked that they were very silent. "They never speak," said he, "until their hunger is satisfied—no easy thing; and then you will hear one of them holding forth in a monotonous tone, while the others listen, but never interrupt him. After the tale of his adventures is given, another takes it up, and so the night passes; for, wake at any hour, and you will hear a dull, unchanging voice; they never seem to sleep, and yet are ready, at the first dawn of day, to start on new adventures to furnish fresh themes for the night. They

are very superstitious," he added, "and that tale is the best which is the most wonderful; they are now telling a favourite story of the large-legged serpent, with a body as thick as the yellow-wood tree, that lives on the Winterberg.

"That strange old man, Skipper, may be thoroughly depended on in situations of danger, but is easily daunted by superstitious feelings. I remember his firing three times at a large sea-cow; the piece snapped in the pan, and Skipper turned back, and was not to be prevailed on to try again." He said, "It was not to be."

When the elephants do not fall after frequent firing, it is thought to be fate; and Skipper quits the bush, and returns hopeless. The Hottentots generally wear charms about them; and a common one is the wood found in the head of the elephant. "Ay, I have heard of that wood," I said.—"To-morrow, I shall probably be able to show it you," replied the hunter.

Well, to-morrow came, and we took an early breakfast, and prepared for our sport. "I will

not again trust to my own legs," I said, "but to those of my horse."—"He will be of little service to you near the elephants," replied the hunter: "fear deprives horses of all power; and I have seen them lie down under the bush to conceal themselves, crouching like dogs;—however, if you like, you can ride until you come near them."

We crossed the Fish River, and directed our course to its junction with the Kat, through a country strongly resembling that I have already described,—hills and hollows, covered with dusky-green bush, and traversed by elephant paths; while at times we came on the dark, deep, shadowy side of a kloof, or caught a gleam of the river winding its serpent way far below us. As we moved on, the noise of the honey-bird was heard, which a Hottentot quickly answered by a whistle, and followed, still whistling his response to every note; and the bird conducted him to the nest, which, unfortunately, overhung a cliff far out of reach, baffling both bird and follower. I have

several times known the Hottentots pursue these winged messengers, and seldom return empty-handed.

The greater part of the day was spent in fruitless search, and the shadows had shifted before the quick-sighted Hottentots had discovered any recent traces; at length, one of them pointed to a distant, high, rocky hill on the opposite side of the Kat River, and forming a continuation to its steep-wooded bank. We descended from the range of hills we had been skirting, reached the river, crossed it, and commenced the steep ascent: the low ground we had lately been traversing, and the abrupt banks of the stream, had intercepted our view of the elephants; but on mounting the summit of the hill, we saw them plainly. Here, those who were riding dismounted, and tied their horses to bushes, turning their heads from the point of attack, and lighting round them the elephants' dried dung—that, in the event of the animals charging that way, they might be safe—left them, and moved cautiously and silently forward.

As we approached, we counted nine or ten, whose backs rose above the high bush that clothed the side of the steep kloof in which they were feeding. We walked quickly forward, until we got immediately above them. The two Hottentots halted, and took their posts; while the hunter, my companion and myself, pursued our course; the surrounding bush and euphorbia were too thick to see any thing, but we heard them close below us quietly browsing on the boughs of the Spekboom, their favourite food. We heard a shot, —another, and then a tremendous rush, as the elephants passed by us through the bush; the hunter fired without success; and I had not time to bring my gun to my shoulder before they were gone; the whole was a thing of a few seconds. We followed, D—— lighting the bush around us; and descending into the hollow, we again heard a shot, and having skirted round the small kloof, returned to the point from which we started.

The effect of the firing was the death of

three; they were small, the largest not being above nine feet in height. I sat on one while they searched for the wood in his head. It lies about an inch beneath the skin, imbedded in fat, just above the eye, and has the appearance of a thorn, or a small piece of twig broken off; some are without it; and on examining the spot minutely, we found that there was a small opening in the skin, a large pore it may be; and I conceive, that this phenomenon is simply accounted for, by the twig breaking in this hole, when the animal is in the act of rubbing his head against the bushes. That it is wood is certain; and that it is a charm of power, the natives consider no less so.

Having horses to carry away the spoil, we opened one of the elephants, and took out the heart; part of which—for the whole was enormous—we intended to take with us; his trunk, at least the upper part of it, was then laid by, and one of his feet completed our stock of provisions, which were bound together by a strip cut from his large flappy ear. The hunter

marked their tusks; we took possession of their tails, and left the remainder a prey to the wolf and the vulture.

The sun was fast sinking, and we were far from our bivouac: the party separated, my companion D——— and Skipper returning on foot; while the little boy, a Hottentot, and myself, pursued our way on horseback. All was shadow on the low grounds before we reached the river, though the evening sun still threw its yellow light upon the green summits of the hills. Twice did we attempt the river, and twice turned to seek a safer passage. Here there is no twilight, and night was coming quickly on, and the water looked doubly dark from the thick overhanging foliage, while, here and there, the spectre-like form of a scathed and blighted tree shone white amidst the surrounding gloom.

In seeking for a short path homeward, the Hottentot, who had never been in the country before, got bewildered, and fairly owned that he knew not where we were; at length, how-

ever, we crossed a stream, and found, from the noises in the bush around us, that we were following the track of the elephants. The little boy and the Hottentot consulted together, and were evidently at a loss, and I had the prospect before me of another fasting night; when, after many turns, one of which would have been sufficient to puzzle me, I thought that the Hottentot's pace became quicker and more decided; presently, we heard the rush of a river, which we crossed, and, ascending the opposite bank, looked down upon the blaze of light from our night-fires, which threw a murky red glow on the surrounding bushes, and heard the dogs' welcome bark.

On reaching the station, we found that our companions had just arrived. The provision was unpacked, and a carbonadje made from the heart; and we addressed ourselves to it with an appetite of which you sons of civilization can have no conception. But what is a carbonadje? you ask. The meat is cut into small portions,

through which a sharp long stick is thrust; it is then peppered, salted, and broiled; and, to hungry men, is, I assure you, very satisfactory feeding. When it makes its appearance *at table*, the stick is stuck tightly in the ground, and the knives attack and detach the meat from it. We did full justice to the heart and trunk: but the foot, which takes more time in dressing, would, I think, be considered by Mrs. Glass "the most esteemed part." This was covered deep in the wood ashes of the fire, and allowed to remain there the greatest part of the night, and in the morning graced our breakfast board. It is more like brawn than any thing to which I can compare it.

On discussing our crossing the rivers, and observing on the quickness with which the Hottentot caught the track whence we had deviated, D—— said, "Oh, it was nothing! I have known Skipper, in the heat of a fatiguing day, throw his hatchet into a bush, and after weeks, return to the same bush and take it up

again. Now, in a country where hill and hollow are equally clothed with jungle, that is something."

We intended that this day should be given to buffalo-shooting, and took the dogs with us, which is never done in following the elephants; and though they are to be met with in herds of hundreds, yet our search was vain. As there was nothing remarkable in the sport, and you are probably, by this time, weary of the butcher-work, it is merely necessary to say, that three more elephants were killed; and that my companion, who was a very fine sportsman, had the honour of bringing down a large one with a single shot, and a share in destroying the other two; while I was a mere looker-on, carrying a gun by way of form.

One thing, however, I must mention—the death of a young calf elephant. We heard the distant but incessant bay of the dogs; when D—— said, "They are probably baiting a young elephant, and they will not leave him until they have torn off his trunk, and he will

then wander about till starved; if it is so, I will go and shoot him." He left us, and we shortly afterwards heard a shot.

We returned to our bivouac, and I expressed my surprise to the hunter, that there could be any necessity for marking the tusks in an uninhabited desert, where no one could interfere with his rights. "'Tis easy," he said, "to know where elephants lie, by the vultures that flock to them; and the Cape-Corps patrols watch their flight, and follow, and take the ivory.—I remember," he added, "returning, after some days, to a hollow where I had left elephants, and finding a party of Kaffers busily employed in extracting the tusks: this was a situation, however, in which a reference to marks would have availed little, and in which I waved my claim, and retired." I could not but think, even after his explanation, that the marking was rather superfluous.

Among other anecdotes, D—— told us of his having seen an elephant raise his fallen companion, and still assist him even when wounded

himself. I saw the beast killed, rather than desert the one that could not follow; and they fell dead together. On my observing that, judging from the paths that intersected the country in all directions, they must be very numerous; he said, "they were, and indeed are so still. I have, I dare say, myself seen as many as three thousand in a troop, on the banks of the Fish River; but I should think, in the last three years, full that number have been destroyed."

He mentioned one thing, that struck me as very extraordinary,—that those who traversed the country never found the body of an elephant that had died a natural death, though they frequently found those that had fallen by the hunter's shot.

I was surprised to hear D—— say, that it was his wish to leave his present life, and to settle quietly in his farm. "Indeed!" I said, "I should have thought that this wild pursuit, and your former dangerous trade, would render a quiet life somewhat sleepy."—"I have a wife now, and shall have children, and have been driven to this by debt and necessity. I have

nearly got over my difficulties, for in twenty months, I and my Hottentots have killed eight hundred elephants; four hundred have fallen by this good gun; and when I am free, I quit it. Scores of times have the elephants charged around me, even within a yard of the bush under which I had crept; and I feel that it was a chance I was not crushed. Once I had fired on a large troop in a deep ravine, one side of which was formed by a steep cliff, which echoed back the sound of the firing, and a hundred elephants, with upraised ears, and loud screams, and tossing trunks, rushed down the narrow pass, and charged the echo, being the opposite side to that in which we had fired, and the one to which we had moved; myself and Hottentots lying in the bush, while they rushed by us. The boldest hunter is killed at last. I have, when pursued by a rhinoceros, sprung down a high bank, not knowing its depth, or whether I might not fall on a rock or stump. No, Sir, it is a life of no common hardship and danger. I have been obliged to eat the veldtschoon (untanned leather shoes) from my feet."

I asked Skipper how many wild beasts he had shot in his life: his list I cannot accurately remember; but there were, I think, two rhinoceroses, one lion—when all his companions fled—I know not how many elephants, tigers, wolves, &c.; but it finished with two Kaffers; for Skipper was not a man of nice distinctions.

The night passed, and in the morning we packed up our baggage, consisting of a pair of saddle-bags; and I bade D—— good bye, wishing him sport, and a high price for his ivory. "Well, Skipper, good bye; I think you would smoke, if you were between the tusks of the elephant."—"No, Sir," he replied, without the slightest change of countenance, apparently taking my speech as literal, "for he would smell me."

We separated—the hunter and boy took their guns and started homeward. Skipper and his companion went with the horses, to bring away the tusks of the dead elephants, while my companion and myself returned from whence we came.

LETTER X.

Return to the Cape.—Early recollections.—Love of home.—A gale off the Cape.—Number of books.—Inn.—A character.—Flocks of locusts.—Effects of Kaffer wars.—Portraits of a Dutch Boor and his family.—The School-master.—Pictures of heroes.—Scriptural learning.—Christina.—Life of a Boor.—Anecdotes.—Ludicrous scene.—Visit to Mr. Rex.—District of George.—Hospitable reception.—A dilemma.—Opinions of Le Vaillant.—Whimsical occurrence.—A comic scene.—Moravian Institution.—Spurtzheim.—A marriage.—Classical names.—Criterion of beauty.—Reach Cape Flats.—Scenes visited in my tour.

ONCE again in Cape-Town, and only waiting there for a vessel to take me to England. *Home*—what a sound to the schoolboy's ears; a thing to dream of during the half-year; to reckon the days on the notched stick, and to cut the notches away, until but a week remains, and then—but a day.

"To drag at each remove a lengthening chain,"

is beautiful in poetry, but scarcely true to nature or experience, (at least, I have not found it so.) How many have I seen pass on their way to India, who, when they left their country and their friends, were resolved that not a day beyond the allotted period should be allowed to elapse without witnessing their return! yet years have passed, and more years will pass, and with each will the wish weaken, until it becomes extinct. No; when the strained eye watches from the deck the dim and doubtful outline of the receding coast or cloudlike mountain, it would appear easier to the boy to part with life than with the warm, home affections that are then throbbing at his heart; and yet, how quickly they change; and mean pursuits of gain or pleasure usurp their place, and shut them out for ever! But why should I yield to such thoughts at such a time; for I can never be so changed as not to feel happiness on meeting you; in visiting the old familiar places; and in again seeing many of whose kindness I have often thought in absence. — Now to my journey.

As I went to the frontier of the Colony by water, in a petty coaster, driven forward by a gale—and he who has never seen a gale off the Cape has something to come, while he who has, will feel no wish to repeat it—I determined to return over-land. I was about to leave the country, and it was my wish to see as much of it as possible;—from the people I had no great expectation of deriving information, or amusement; indeed, my ignorance of their language would have been a sufficient bar to that; but I heard that there was scenery that would well repay the journey; and having found an agreeable companion, whose knowledge of Dutch supplied my deficiency, I was much gratified, and, without attempting to give a regular detail of our route, which would be *deadly lively*, and which you may meet with in half a dozen books, written at the true ox-waggon-pace, as if the traveller had been inspired by the motion; I will send you a few slight sketches that I made on the road.

We had just dismounted; our horses were taking their feed, and I was dozing away the

time in a small house, that honoured itself with the name of Inn, on the banks of the Sunday River, between Graham's Town and Algoa Bay, when a conversation at the door mingled itself with my half sleep, and my companion, in a few minutes, entered with an old man, who took off his fur cap most ceremoniously, on being introduced. There was something striking about the appearance of the stranger, in his thin white locks, withered features, and wandering grey eyes; and when he spoke of the pursuits to which he had devoted thirty years, there was an energy in his words, an enthusiasm that had outlived sixty-five winters. He was now, he told us, travelling to Kafferland; and on hearing I had lately been there, made many inquiries about its trees; for his life had been devoted to their study. I heard afterwards from my companion, who knew him, that he had collected sixty varieties; that he had written descriptions of their peculiar properties; had made drawings of their leaves, fruits, and flowers; of the birds that built in them, and of the insects that fed on them; that

half his life had been spent in the deep solitude of the African forests, till each of their thousand birds had become familiar to him, by its note; that he was a homeless, unconnected, solitary being, holding communion with Nature, in her still and secret places,—in her most savage scenes, where his wild feelings had been nourished, until they almost verged upon insanity.

He had been a soldier in the German armies; or, by his own account, something between the commissioned and non-commissioned officer, and had many long-passed adventures to tell; "And it is curious," observed my companion, "to mark the old man, when carried away by the feelings of former days, check himself with the exclamation, 'God forgive me, that I should still feel pride in such things!' He is a believer in the ancient superstitions of his own country, and in all the wild tales told in this: an enthusiast in every thing — in nature, in music, and in religion.

"The Boors, in whose houses he is familiar, though he hates their grossness, and looks down from that imaginative height, to which

Nature lifts her votaries, on their sordid pursuits, consult the kind-hearted old visionary on points of religion and morality; and he counsels while he despises them—for he is of the *Fatherland*."

His snuff-box is completely that of a naturalist, being a tin case full of insects, as he says it is the easiest way of destroying them; and his fingers are so accustomed to fumbling among the beetles, that he finds no inconvenience, and manages to get his pinch when no other person could. My companion told me, that he had never seen any thing equal to his delight on receiving a copy of Cowper's Poems, which he had given to him; his feelings agreeing well with the Poet's powers of describing nature, and with the gloomy cast of Calvinism to be found in the Task. Old Wehdemann left us, after having strung as many questions together as half an hour would permit; and scarcely waiting for an answer to one, galloped off to overtake his waggon. On reaching Cape-Town, I saw a collection of his specimens, that had been purchased by a gentleman residing

there, and his plan struck me as ingenious; each variety formed a book-like box, of which the covers were made of the wood, the back of the bark, while that part representing the outside of the leaves slid open, and contained his descriptions and drawings.

In leaving the district of Albany, we passed through a flock of locusts, extending three miles, not so thick as to darken the sun, of which I have read in some descriptions, but still a strange and wonderful sight. As we rode on, they rose in such swarms, that the horses threw up their heads, and showed every mark of impatience and annoyance; while, as far as the eye could reach in height and extent, nothing was to be seen but their bright, glancing wings.

Of all curses that visit the earth, to paralyze the industry and the hopes of man, this is the most dreadful: they come in their countless millions, borne upon the wind, and desolation marks their path, and vegetation vanishes at their approach. They are the passive instruments of dark anger; and when the work of destruction is complete, another wind is raised

to bear them far from the ruin they have made.

In crossing the district of Uitenhage, we saw the black, smoked remains of farm-houses, burnt during the Kaffer war. I know not why the bare walls of a house, a ruined gable alone left standing, strike the heart with a feeling of more utter loneliness, than the dim forest, or drear mountain's side. Is it in the contrast of our feelings, in the knowledge that it was not always thus, that here, beings with hopes and fears, and pains and pleasures, like our own, once lived, and that they are gone?

There is a great sameness in the inhabitants, that are thinly sprinkled over the country we traversed, leaving little to describe: take, then, one boor's house, as a sample of the whole; and that house shall be Hendrick Vander Zephyr's. We rode up, dismounted, gave our horses to the guide, and entered, announced by the barking of a dozen dogs: the good Vrouw rose from her easy cushioned chair, and welcomed us with "Sit, Mynheer;" and while my com-

panion was explaining who we were, and where we were going, I examined the room and its occupants. The mistress was of ample presence—a strong contrast to the bustling person that keeps an English farm-establishment in activity, for every thing about her bespoke listless indolence: her bare feet were thrust into slippers, and supported by a stool, while her whole exertion was to make the *tea-water*, the old fashioned Dutch tea-pot, on the table before her, being in constant requisition during the day. At another table, in the large room, sat the daughter working; and at a third, two slave girls were ironing; while sundry half-naked slave children crossed the room, with their silent, stealthy pace; and dirty Dutch children, resembling movable heaps of foul linen, toddled across it.

The work of the day being completed, Hendrick himself at length entered,—a perfect specimen of a boor; phlegmatic, indifferent, a large lump of apathy, whose hat scarcely ever left his head, or the pipe his mouth. Again did my

companion tell the oft-told tale; (his province, from my want of Dutch;) which meant, that we wanted beds for the night, and horses in the morning; to which the good man muttered assent. Next poured in some of the sons, powerful, hardy youngsters, and the schoolmaster, from all of whom our hands underwent most friendly pressures; but the *Meester* deserves a separate notice. The tutor, who teaches the ingenuous youth of Southern Africa, is generally a discharged English soldier, and leads a kind of middle life, a connecting link between the family and the slaves: his salary is very small; but then he is fed, and found in brandy, and, for this, instructs the younger branches in polite literature, and performs various trifling acts of servitude for the elders. For instance, I observed that he reported to Hendrick, that the calves were all present; but I felt myself too much a stranger to inquire, whether by that he meant his pupils, or the offspring of the cows. He brought forward several of the boys to exhibit their proficiency in the English lan-

guage: the sounds that came from the unwilling urchins might be any thing; but they drew forth a compliment on the skill and industry that had been so successful.

But there was one member of the family that must not be forgotten—Christina Vander Zephyr. How shall I describe her, or how account for her being the daughter of such parents?—in truth, I greatly doubt it. She might be about sixteen; but it is difficult to judge of girls' ages in this country, they ripen so quickly beneath its glowing sun; and her form was of the ripest, and her eyes the darkest and most speaking. There is no place so wildly remote in which women cannot learn coquetry; and Christina was not deficient, for she crossed the room frequently, when she would have found some difficulty in telling what she wanted, and glanced so often round with her witching eyes, that the work she appeared employed on went slowly forward.

I have now described the family, and will proceed to the room, the whitewashed

walls of which were adorned by pictures of Wellington, Napoleon, and other military chiefs; but to distinguish the Emperor Alexander from the King of Prussia surpassed my skill: they were much prized by Hendrick; and I rose in his opinion from having seen the originals. Napoleon's olive visage, which was nearly the size of his whole body, I shall never forget, or the diabolical squint from his eyes. There were two or three little Scripture pieces that were infinitely amusing: a Jonas issuing from the whale's mouth, with the impetus of a shell from a mortar, while the fish evinced a perfect satisfaction at discharging its lodger, by the flapping of its huge tail. There was but one book in the room—a large silver-clasped, black-letter Dutch Bible, which contained a map of the world, and many strange old prints. In looking at the map, the Vrouw insisted on it, that Italy was England; the Meester, when referred to, assented, for his place was of more importance than the situation of a country; and I did not volunteer a dispute with the whole race of the Vander Zephyrs.

Hendrick gave us a dissertation before supper on the history of Joseph, which he appeared to think new to us, and went into with much minuteness of detail, by no means in his comments sparing Potiphar's wife. We then proceeded to discuss the supper, in which there was one dish that haunted me during the journey—an abominable mixture of sheep's-tail fat and sheep's-head. Indeed, sheep's-tail fat appears to be the foundation of all their dishes, and even the vegetables swim in it; but there was good bread and butter, and milk, and dried peaches, graced by the welcome *smaakly keeten*,—good appetite,—rather a superfluous wish to one who has been all day on his horse. Hendrick asked my companion and myself the universal question, "Whether we were married, and what children we had?" and I, being unfortunately single, was compared to the solitary elephant that is driven from the herd to wander by itself. We then talked over the hardship of the taxes—a never-failing subject; and having completed our supper, were shown to our room,

where Hendrick left us with the wish *slaap-gerust*,—sound sleep.

At daybreak we rose, and found the family up before us, all assembled in the large room; the moderate charge was settled — the horses saddled—the cup of coffee drank — and the shake of the hand given all round. Hendrick's was accompanied by a wish, that I would tell the people of England that the *opgadf*, a tax on produce, pressed very heavily on the boors; while the good lady desired her compliments to England. Christina too was there, but with her hair in papers;—the devil seize those papers! they have destroyed more fair dreams of beauty than I shall ever have again. I wish that girls would know that their principal power, like Samson's, lies in their hair, and that papers are to them what the scissars were to him,—that by which he lost his strength, and deserved to lose it.

I have but little to add to my sketch of the family of Hendrick, whose house and name it will be in vain for travellers to search

for in our line of route, though the description is not exaggerated, and the incidents introduced, all occurred,—except that he is of the better class of boors, and possesses all the necessaries of life in abundance. In a remote country like this, the farmer can never be rich, for there is no market for his over-produce; but his wants are few, and he, on his extensive farm, far distant from any neighbour, leads what is called a patriarchal life; that is, he breeds his own horses, kills his own mutton, and wears rough sheep-skin trowsers and no stockings. Hendrick the son, eats, sleeps, and smokes, just as Hendrick the father did,—a thing of apathy and ignorance, that nothing could drive to a lively despair, save the loss of sheep's-tail fat.

The boor's house is frequently large, and the outhouses extensive; but it has a desolate air; within there is nothing like comfort, and without, all is

"Barren, and bare, and unimproved around."

"Why do you not plant oaks to give a sheltered look to your house?"—"I shall be dead

before they are grown up."—"But for your children?"—"Let my children do it then;" was the dialogue of a friend of mine with one of them.

To strangers there is no forwardness of hospitality, but there is no want of it; perhaps they do not offer, from considering it a thing of course; and they must be acquitted of interested motives, for their charge, and they do not always make one, is strikingly moderate.

Among many anecdotes of the country, with which my companion enlivened the road, the two following struck me as curiously characteristic of manners.

"A young Dutch boor, remarkable for his size, strength, and brutality, had treated his wife so harshly that she left him. Some days elapsed, and the husband, thinking it time to inquire about the absentee, saddled his horse and went to his mother-in-law, judging that his wife had taken refuge there.

"The old lady to whom he paid the visit, was the largest woman for miles round; so fat, that

when she rose from her ample chair, she leaned for support on two stout crutches. The man fastened his horse to the door, and entered with the usual salutation, '*Dag Moeder,*' Good-day, mother. '*Dag myn kynd,*' Good-day, my child, replied the old woman, rising at the same time and coming towards him: so far all looked peaceable; but the aspect of affairs somewhat changed, when passing her visitor, she locked the door by which he had entered, put the key into her pocket, and on approaching him within range of her crutch, swung it round with a force that, alighting on his head, nearly stunned him; on his recoil another blow awaited him on the other side—and another and another; and all this time his wife sat in silent satisfaction; while the slaves and Hottentots, who had crowded into the room, stretched their wide mouths, and showed their white teeth in delighted laughter. The old woman's portly person and sweeping crutch commanded the breadth of the apartment, and every attempt at passing her received desperate

punishment; the sufferer dodged and ducked in vain; the blows followed each other quickly; he attempted to burst the door, but failed; and still his wife sat calmly at her work, and the slaves' laughter continued. It would have been easy to push the unwieldly body of his enemy over—but she was his mother-in-law, and that was not to be thought of; and he looked around, and saw but one chance of escape—a narrow slit of a window, at which he made a leap, and with great difficulty wriggled his body through; while, taking most unhandsome advantage of his situation, his mother-in-law thundered her blows upon him. After his retreat, he came to the door with, '*Dag Moeder.*'—'*Dag myn kynd,*' replied the old woman, in affection's softest tone, and off he rode.

"My brother," said my companion, "was present at the following scene, and I remember his saying that it was the only time he had ever seen Dutch phlegm overcome by situation. A party of boors had gone out into the forests of the Bushman's River, elephant-shooting; they sepa-

rated, and in the evening all returned except one; search was made, and the man found; his horse feeding near, his gun lying close to him, discharged, and the ball, which had carried death with it, in his body. The families, for miles round, were collected for the funeral, at which his mother, wife, and sister were present. The old woman stood over the body of her child, and said, 'Yes, you were the third and last, and all have died the same death; my eldest was killed by the elephants, my second was crushed by the branch of a tree, which the huge beast pressed upon him, as it rushed by, and he lived and died a miserable cripple—and you are the last.' The sister followed; and then the wife broke out, 'You lament a brother, and you a child, but I have lost my man.' There was a seated anguish in the woman's words and manner that strongly affected my brother; yet he allowed that there was a touch of the ludicrous, which mingled with the scene, that he could not resist. A feast was in preparation for the numerous guests, and the females collected

had to perform in a double capacity; while their two occupations, that of mourning and cutting cucumbers, were made to keep time to each other: the low monotonous tones were suited to slow cutting; but as the grief became energetic, the vegetable cutting waxed vehement, and, as it rose to a climax, (the time being taken from a very fat old woman,) the knives glided, and the cucumbers vanished like lightning."

If from the sublime to the ridiculous be but a step, it is a still shorter one from the pathetic to the ludicrous.

Thus did we perform a journey of nearly seven hundred miles, travelling on from house to house, and procuring fresh horses and a guide every three or four hours; the monotony of the path being broken by having sometimes to swim a river, and sometimes to cross a mountain-pass: but there was one break in that journey too agreeable to be forgotten or omitted,—a visit that we paid to Mr. Rex, an English gentleman, who owns a large extent of country at the mouth of the Knysna. We

turned a day's journey out of our route to reach his residence, over a vast tract of tremendous mountain country; and we were well repaid, for in that day's journey we saw almost every variety of scenery that Southern Africa has to offer,—from the high, naked precipice, whose rocky side was girdled half-way up by a steep, narrow, stony path, impassable to any thing less hardy and sure than the horse of the country, —to the green, sheltered glens, or rocky nooks, where water lodged, and rich shrubs and bright flowers flourished,—or the beautiful winding stream that we frequently crossed, as it flowed beneath the purple-scented blossoms of the Queur-boom, from which tree it takes its name. Then, on attaining some difficult height, and hoping to find that we had only to descend into the level country, and that the tremendous barrier was past, we beheld higher steeps before us, while all around, far as the eye could reach, was a sea of mountains—wild—boundless —desolate:—there was no habitation—scarcely a living creature—save the grey vulture hover-

ing in mid-air below us. As evening approached we descended the mountain, and caught the distant line of ocean, and the indented coast and bay, traced like a map, before us; while the latter part of our journey lay through extensive forests, that would have been dim at mid-day, and now, when night had closed around, were black with shadowy gloom. Our guide, however, knew the country well, and rode quickly forward, threading the forest-paths; and we, having procured fresh horses, followed him amidst strange fanciful shapes, and ever-shifting appearances. At length, on coming to a part of the country that had been partially cleared, he halted, and pointing to a distant star-like light, said, "That is Mr. Rex's."

This part of the district of George is said to be the most beautiful in the Colony, and I have certainly seen nothing to equal it. Its broad river, dotted with bright green islands; the rich pastures bordering its banks, and,—when standing on a height,—the vast extent that the eye commands; the gleam above gleam of water

that appear running far up into dark, boundless forests, and the whole terminated by mountain ranges melting into each other, while the summits of the last, far distant, airy outline, mingle with the line of cloud that hangs above them, and rests upon their peaks.

My companion and I remained some days rambling in different directions along the shores of the river, which, near its mouth, resembles a lake, encircled by a pebbly beach, but quickly contracting, flows through the forests, a shadowy stream, under giant trees, and amidst luxuriant plants and flowers. It is impossible for pen or pencil to give an idea of the rich and varied vegetation that darkens over an African river: the eye revels in a prodigal waste of beauty,—is now caught by the beds of lilies, with their large leaves and flowers of ivory whiteness; and then by the striking contrast with the deep, sombre greens around, produced by the different aloes covering the banks in clustering profusion, and rich red blossom.

To me, my stay was full of varied pleasures,

whether engaged in watching the graceful rose-coloured flamingo skim over the broad, smooth river, while its reflection floated below it on the water; in seeing the white, grey, and black herons rise from the wooded recesses on its banks, roused by the sound of our horses' approach, or in the pleasing intercourse of social amusement, the time passed quickly on; and it will be long ere I can forget the beauty of the scenery among which Mr. Rex lives, or the kind welcome that he gave a stranger; and to meet the information and the manners of polished life, without its hacknied and wearying forms, in a situation so wildly remote, has an effect not easily described, and one from which I found it difficult to escape.

Through the whole establishment there was an air of active industry, and it seemed to possess every thing within itself—carpenters, masons, saddlers, &c. while the house and gardens were in the nicest order. Nor was it alone immediately around, that improvement was at work; the owner's views were more

extensive, and he was building a decked vessel to coast between his residence and Cape Town, a distance of about three hundred miles. We went with him to see the vessel, which appeared strongly and regularly constructed; its name was to be the Britannia, but I begged hard to have it called the Knysna, as the first that had been built from its forests, or launched upon its waters.

In leaving this hospitable house, night overtook us long before we reached George, the limit of our day's journey; and on descending a steep, rocky, forest ravine, in the hollow of which the Cayman's (crocodile) river flowed, the following scene—half serious, half ludicrous—occurred.

We were leading our horses down a road, that was frequently broken into steps by large timber laid across it, while the traveller was only prevented from falling over its steep sides by trunks of trees placed longitudinally; when the repeated howl of a tiger that was prowling in the bush—that short quick howl which he

gives on scenting his prey—sounded close to us. To me it was new and startling, but my companion had heard it before, and was aware that an attack was little to be dreaded; not so our young Dutch guide, who felt certain that it was an elephant; and on reaching the river, plunged his horse eagerly in, to escape the howl that still pursued us. Fear had driven him into the water, and fear drove him out again; for, at the first plunge, the horse was beyond his depth, and the boy declared that the tide was up, and the river impassable. We asked its breadth, but he could not tell; and we could form no judgment, for all around was dark, except the faint moonlight ripple on the gloomy water; we tasted, and found it quite salt; and the roar of the sea dashing against the cliffs, was to be heard in the stillness of the night. We placed stones at the brink, which were in a short time left dry, which told us that the tide was retiring; we then kept up a fire of stones upon the bush where the beast was lurking, and exerted our utmost strength

to send one to the opposite side to judge the breadth of the stream; but in vain; they fell into the black, dismal water; but to remain all night listening to the tiger's howl was out of the question, so we made another attempt, and with a little swimming and wading, got over the Cayman's hole. This was the spot that Le Vaillant described as so dreadful; and it was in this part of the district of George, that he formed his permanent encampment, and added so largely to his collection of natural history: nor am I surprised that he should have lingered here, for the lover of Nature might roam far ere he could discover such varied beauty in forest, in river, and in mountain. I read his travels when a boy, and I remember then thinking it a delightful book; and even now I can sympathize in his enthusiasm for Nature; and he who has wandered in the boundless forests, beneath the grey-trunked, ancient trees, shaggy with hanging moss, or lifeless, scathed, and withered branches, contrasted in their cold decay with the clusters

of parasitical plants clinging around them with rich glowing colours,—who has startled the flitting, many-plumaged birds from their lone retreats,—who has seen the serpent glide away in dreadful beauty at his approach,—who has felt the awe that darkens the spirit, and yet raises it, amidst the tremendous solitudes of Nature, will feel, when others smile. Thus far, then, I can follow him; but when he sentimentalizes in downright earnest on a Hottentot girl, and minutely describes all the little palpitations of affection for a capacious-mouthed, small-eyed, snub-nosed, fuzzy-headed female, I will own that he gets beyond me. I have seen many of them—generally drunk, or, according to their own expressive phraseology, "more drunker than sober,"—but I never met with a Nerina.

But I have passed the Lang-kloof, where a scene occurred worth the describing. We had stopped at the house of a boor, a man of a half-cracked, whimsical character,—the effect, I believe, of a tiger's bite in the head,—when an

attempt was made by our guide to impose on us, and to take back his horses, on the plea of their being tired, when we, after having paid for five, had only ridden them three hours. My companion argued the point with much temper, but the fellow was dogged; and we finished the argument by leaving the house and catching and saddling the horses. While this was going forward, a tall, gaunt figure came to the door, and hallooing out that he would not see his countryman taken in, desired that we would come and explain the difference. My companion went in, while I saddled up and followed; but, before I arrived, the pleadings on both sides had been attentively listened to, and the sentence, which ran thus, pronounced; "Scoundrels as the English are, yet you are a greater, for you are trying to cheat them." On entering, I was introduced as an Englishman about to leave the country;—"Ah! I suppose he has defrauded the poor Colonists, and has money enough to live at home now," was his strange and amusing comment: he shook me,

however, heartily by the hand, and asked whether the Vrouw had given us any thing to eat and drink. "Yes, some tea."—"Tea! baboons drink tea, — men drink brandy;" and three glasses were immediately ordered. I excused myself, saying, "that I did not drink brandy in the morning," when the boor looked at me in astonishment, and mumbled something, in which "English beast" was audible; and seeing that I did not look pleased, added, "No one cares what I say,—every one knows I speak the truth." There was something irresistible in an excuse that made the first offence worse; and my companion, myself, and our strange host, touched glasses, and while he drank his off, we raised ours to our lips, and put them down again: he watched this incomprehensible manœuvre of ours, with a strange glance of humour in his restless eye, and then finished the two remaining glasses. On rising, we received a most pressing invitation to stay, with a promise that he would give us a good dinner, good

beds, and good horses in the morning, and would charge nothing: but we were not to be tempted; and I thought that the Vrouw, who had appeared very anxious during this scene with her extraordinary partner, seemed well pleased at our decision.

We turned from our path to visit Gnaden-thal, (the Vale of Grace,) the principal Moravian Institution for Hottentots, and were much pleased with its secluded mountain-sheltered situation, and with the air of quiet neatness and industry reigning throughout. The rough cutlery made there is much prized in the country; and the embroidered collars, &c. worked by the female Hottentots, are, I believe, fully equal to the productions of fairer fingers. Then their schools, filled with urchins of every variety of hue, and every kind of ugliness, toiling up the path of learning on the Lancasterian system, were infinitely diverting. I should like to know what Spurzeim would say to such a set of skulls as passed under my inspection that

day; while the pigmies, wrapped in their sheep-skins, crouched over their books, and when I passed, turned by stealth round, and

"With shrinking, serpent optics on me stared."

We dined at the common table with the brothers and sisters, and I was gratified by their kind and simple attentions, and primitive manners. While sitting there, I said to one of them, "That after a few more years of wandering, I should feel inclined to come and settle in the Vale of Grace, but from a fear that their industrious community would not receive so useless a member." He laughed, and replied, "They would make something of me." After having succeeded with the Hottentots, I suppose they despair at nothing. Without entering on the question of missions, a system that renders the indolent and degraded Hottentot actively useful, and as such makes him respect himself, and gives him a rank among men, must be good.

We were now approaching the termination

of our journey, and entering on scenes with which I was well acquainted: we traversed the wild pass of the Franche-Hoek mountains, and descended into its beautiful valley, amidst the white farm-houses peeping out from their oaks and vines, every one of which I knew so well. Here, in stopping for horses, we saw the preparations going forward for the marriage of the Veldt-Cornet's* daughter, and they were ample: heaps of dead poultry lay in the kitchen; and I, while drying myself at its fire,—for the morning mists had hung low on the mountains, and wetted us to the skin,—watched the proceedings, and saw Apollo,† the most hideous and bandy-legged of Mosambique slaves, come in, loaded with fire-wood; while Cupid, an animal of a mixed breed, half Hottentot, half Mosambique, brought in a store of pumpkins; and Eva sat in the large chimney-nook picking fowls, close to Annasina, who was scrubbing a kettle:

* A petty authority, whose chief use is, I think, to procure horses for travellers.

† Very common names among the slave population of the Cape.

indeed, it was necessary to look for some time into the gloomy recess before the ladies became visible; for their hue, and that of the place in which they were crouched, being equally black, they were discovered only by the rolling of their large eyes. In the chief room were assembled the principal vrouws of the flock, peeling almonds, cleaning raisins, &c. all busy in making the good things which, on the following day, they were to assist in devouring.

Among the congregated, I recognised a fat, well-looking woman, and told her that I remembered her, though she had grown much larger since we met. This, considering that the lady was always remarkable for her rotundity, may be thought not to have been complimentary; but I knew that I was in a land where the highest expression of delicate praise that an admirer has for the lady of his love, is to tell her that she is *spek-vet*, fat as a pig; and by the gratified smile that spread over the ample visage of Mrs. ——, I saw that it was well received. The master of the house re-

gretted that we had come a day too soon; and when I saw the good cheer, the important airs of the mother, and the bustling looks of the whole household, even to the slave drudges in the kitchen, and remembered that the bride was a pretty girl, I half regretted it myself; but we were now within less than fifty miles of our journey's end, and after having been loitering three weeks on the road, were too impatient for its termination to admit of farther delays.

To me the route had been full of amusement; yet I was right glad to find myself on the sandy Cape Flats, and to see the outlines of the Table Mountain, and the Lion's Head rising clearly in the distance.

It was ten months since I had left the Bay that now lay before me, and in that time I had seen much that, in after life, I shall often recall. I had shared the hard life of the elephant-shooter, and slept in the bee-hive hut of the Kaffer, and traversed his beautiful country. I had visited the house of the phlegmatic boor, and the station of the subdued-toned mission-

ary. I had seen most of the savage animals of the country, the elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus. I had sought for the lion in the country where they were once common, but the tract had been partially settled on; and the wild beasts retire at the appearance of man, with an instinctive feeling, that a being more savage and relentless than themselves has invaded their haunts, and that their ferocity is no match for his. I had seen the many-coloured birds in their native woods, and on their native rivers. I had wandered through the gloomy arches of the boundless forests, where the tall trees cast a massive shade that seems never to have been broken by one ray of light. I had seen those trees with their many-coloured blossoms, standing in beauty and in pride, while the rich creepers, that hung like light drapery from their wide-spreading branches, moved with every breeze, affording a striking and mournful contrast. I had seen them stretched at their length, mouldering, fallen untouched by man, in the heart of their own dark forests. I

had feasted on the loveliness of flowers, in the country where flowers are the most lovely, and where their beauty gladdens the lone wilderness; for the pride of your greenhouse is, in Africa, but a wild flower. I had seen society under new forms, and Nature as at her birth; and now the Bay lay with its wide sweep stretched before me, dotted with English ships; and I end as I began, once again in Cape Town.

LETTER XI.

Touch at Saint Helena.—Visit Napoleon's House.—His Tomb.—The Old Serjeant.—Flying Fish.—Dolphin.—Cowper and Campbell.—The Spectre-bark.—Singular Story.—Anecdotes of the Natives.—Varieties of Trees, Animals, &c. — Recollections. — Contrasts.—Natural Scenery.—Schoolboy Days.—Arrival in England.

I KNOW not that I can better lighten of their weight some of the heavy hours of a voyage, than by writing a letter of recollections, and thoughts, and hopes,—that schoolboy word.

Saint Helena must not be passed over without notice, for it was the only land we made; though all that can be said of this miserable place, has been often repeated. I have heard that Napoleon was shocked on landing; and I can easily believe it. To him it must have spoken, "Hope enters not here!" Batteries are placed at every possible point, and its naked and sun-scorched rocks bristle with guns. A

scene more drear, barren, and desolate, I never saw; and its few trees, among which are the cocoa-nut and date, far from enlivening, add, by contrast, to its parched and sterile appearance. I visited the prisoner's tomb; it is very plain, and bears no inscription. This is as it should be; it is enough to know that Napoleon lies there.

I saw the house in which he lived, the room in which he died, and that in which his body lay previous to the funeral: the first is now a granary, the last is a stable. I am no enthusiast with regard to Buonaparte, nor do I bow before the magic of that "name at which the world grew pale;" but I felt a strong sensation of disgust at seeing the vulgar use to which the house is appropriated: it should be left, a lone and melancholy ruin, for the night-winds to moan round.

The old serjeant who has charge of the tomb, produced books, one for the names of visitors, another for their remarks, or thoughts, that might arise on the occasion. Methinks the

Governor must be a humourist, and find amusement in the mawkish sentiment, the absurd effusions of sublimity, and the doleful attempts at humour, to which this direction has given birth. My companion read some, but they are forgotten, except that one lady "shed a silent tear"—a rare thing in a woman; and one gentleman had made a discovery that Napoleon was ambitious. We remained three days, and, much as I hate a ship, felt no regret at leaving St. Helena.

I am writing this under the line, with its tremendous sun, and glassy, glaring sea, its fantastic sultry skies, and sudden gathering squalls. It is the most interesting part of the passage; for the inhabitants of the deep play around the vessel, as if to amuse us in the calm. The shark shoots like a lightning-gleam through the dark-blue waters. The flocks of flying-fish spread their light silvery wings, and skim over the calm water, in which they dip for a moment, and rise again with a renewed power of flight. Happy, joyous things they seem—too bright

for their cold element, and rising into the soft sunny air, in the playful exercise of the power that distinguishes them from their finny brethren; but they rise from the wave only to escape the death that lurks in it, and fly from the pursuit of the dolphin—that peacock of the deep. For beauty of ever-varying hues, I never saw any thing to equal the dolphin. When it ascends to the surface of the smooth, clear water, and shows a gleam of shifting, liquid light, or wavering to and fro by the vessel's side, is, at one moment, of a deep rich brown; then a glance is caught of its dark azure fin; and when the sun touches it, green, yellow, and silver gleams follow, which have faded into some other hue almost ere you can name them. I have seen the sea alive with them all round the ship, darting from the waves in thousands and tens of thousands, while the whole surface of the water was illumed by their ever-radiant colours.

"Within the shadow of the ship,
I watch'd their rich attire,

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black;
They coiled and swam, and every track
Was a flash of golden fire."

A ship is the reverse of poetical, notwithstanding all that Cowper or Campbell can say about it. The first represents his as

"Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings;"

and the last, in a prose passage more beautiful than poetry, in which he describes a launch, with the deep, silent expectation of the assembled multitude, and their final burst of enthusiasm; and when he speaks of the thoughts that arise in the bosom, on seeing her swing round in the calm water,—all the days of battle, all that she had to do and to suffer for her country,—what English heart does not beat more proudly and more quickly! These are ships of war,—and whatever may be the evils of war, it at least redeems every thing connected with it from vulgarity;—but all other vessels, from the stately Indiaman to the coasting trader, are but floating shops. In an imaginative point of view, I grant it noble. When we think of its going forth, like the lone bird

through the air, itself a speck upon the wide and weltering sea, and of its visiting the furthermost parts of the earth, there is something of grandeur in the thought. When we hear of the "spectre-bark," whose dark and distant form is seen by the lightning's sheeted glare, and seen but for an instant, as it flies before the gale with every sail set, while the foam of the wave is of a dazzling brightness in the blaze; we own that there is no story of superstition to equal it. But when we look upon it with respect to a passage,—and I fear that I shall never be able to regard it in any other light,—as a place in which we are "cabined, cribbed, confined" for months, in which space is measured by the inch, and fresh water by the drop;—when we think that the captain has calculated on us for a profit, ranking us with the rest of his cargo—consisting of sundries, or hides, or tallow, or Cape wine,—the vessel no longer "walks the waters like a thing of life," but, stript of every ideal charm, remains for ever a thing of coarse reality.

No, it is all hateful; and a voyage is one of

the shadows in life's picture that gives relief to its lights. It has been laid down by some, that the occupations of the blessed in the next world will be but a shadow of what made their happiness in this; I trust the converse of their proposition does not hold good, or I shall decidedly be sent to sea for my peccadillos, and put on board some convict ghost-ship lying in the offing, to be taught the lesson of humility, that nothing can teach so well; for there we are made to feel what dependent creatures we are, that a calm can depress, a breeze excite, and a dinner render amiable. Think of undergoing eternal rancid butter, bad biscuit, tainted water, and milkless tea and coffee; and *for ever* to hear no sounds but the rattling of the sails and the straining of the ropes; and to see near us only the disconsolate hens thrusting their scraggy necks out of the coops, and the consumptive-looking pigs and sheep in the long-boat, while all around is sea and sky interminable, the distant line of the horizon being at times broken by blue misty clouds, mocking the straining eye with the hope of a mountain

coast; and to hear from the shadowy spectre of a captain, in answer to the question, "When shall we reach shore?" the dead eternal, "*Never!*"

I have said, that this is a letter of recollections: and coming from the region of the wild superstition of the Flying Dutchman, and knowing my taste for such tales, you would be surprised that I should have heard no legend connected with it. The following I had from an intelligent young naval officer to whom it occurred. The facts were given without any attempt at effect; and, as far as my memory allows, I will repeat them as I heard them; though I fear that it can scarcely be considered as an appearance of the visionary vessel whose cruising ground is round the Cape, as this, I am told by sailors, can be explained without having recourse to the supernatural. Their solution I will not give, thinking of the story as Sir Lucius O'Trigger of the quarrel, "that it is very pretty as it stands, and explanation will but spoil it."

"I had command of the W——, a small brig,

and was cruising off Madagascar, on the look-out for slave ships:—it was near two o'clock in the day, when I discovered a sail between us and the coast. We saw it clearly, myself and the two midshipmen, and determined to keep her in sight, and to watch, but without altering our course, or appearing to notice her; she still continued to creep along the shore, and then, as if suddenly perceiving us for the first time, hoisted more sail. I now felt certain that it was a slaver, and bore down upon her. We had to tack, in order to clear a reef of rock that ran far out; still, however, we were gaining, when, on her making a small headland, I said, 'Do you still see her?' to a young officer, whose glass was directed towards her. 'No, she has disappeared behind that point, and it was so suddenly, that I think she must have struck her masts and lowered her sails, to lie concealed.'—'I am certain now she is a slaver,' I said, 'and she shall not escape us.' We reached the headland, which formed one of the boundaries of a small bay, in which I felt certain

the vessel must be; but the evening was coming on, the coast was wild and rocky, and I brought my brig to anchor at the mouth, so that nothing could get out unseen, while I waited for the rising of the moon. A dead calm came on after sunset, and not a sound was to be heard on that lonely coast. Before the moon was up, I had out a boat and four men, and taking my pistols, jumped into her, leaving these directions with the elder midshipman, that should I fire *one* pistol, he should send a boat in the direction of the report; but should it be repeated, he should send both boats and every man that could be spared. I went and examined every creek, every small inlet of the bay, every rock beneath the shadow of which a boat might have lain concealed. The moon had risen, and gleamed with its cold, pale light on that rocky bay; and when, after a silent search of nearly three hours, I rowed for the brig, and, on approaching, saw her small deck covered with men, a strange feeling came over me. 'Something has happened!' I said. 'Have

you seen her?' was the question of the elder midshipman. 'No.'—'What, have you seen nothing?'—'Nothing!' I replied. He then told me, that about a quarter of an hour after I had gone, they heard the brig hailed; that they listened, and again distinctly heard it; that in about two hours they heard screams,—one might have been deceived, but they all heard them; that a belief came over him, that I had gone on board the slaver, and was detained; and that just before my return, the boat had been ordered out to search for me.

"'All this sounds strangely!' I observed to the narrator; 'but how do you explain it?'—'I cannot explain it.' I ordered careful watch to be kept during the night, and at daybreak again examined every point of the bay. There was no ship, and no sign of wreck. A vague apprehension and superstitious feeling was creeping over the men, who gladly left that part of the coast, which I named 'Enchanted Bay.' I have bewildered myself with thinking of it; but such are the facts."

In the country I have left, there was much of a wild interest that I had not exhausted, and that I cannot hope to meet with again. I will describe it with the scenes that produced it, and throw my mind back upon the past, for of the present I have no pleasurable impressions: a voyage is a blank in existence; let me, then, fill it with recollections.

There was to me no common excitement in the forest rides, and in exploring the dark streams that wander through them, and are lost in their remote and shadowy recesses. I have come unexpectedly upon spots where, through openings in the overhanging luxuriant vegetation, the light fell upon the clear glittering water, causing it well to merit the title of the "diamond of the desert." I have stood on its banks of cool, soft hillocks of moss, and looked down its course, over-arched by the trunks and branches of tall trees of redundant growth and varied foliage, while close to its brink the grey willow dipped its pendent boughs into the stream, which rippled through a fringe of

acacias, lilies, reeds, large-leafed water plants, and all that mass of mingled leaf and blossom which is nourished by the river, and pays back the debt by beautifying that which produced it. In such places have I met with the white skull and twisted horns of the koodoo, lying half hid in the fern and moss, and showing that the gaunt wolf or lurking tiger had been there, and that the swift and beautiful antelope had been his prey. There were the hair-breadth escapes and strange adventures of the lone elephant-hunter, listened to in the stillness of an African night, as we sat round his fire, which threw its wild, uncertain, dusky glow on the half-defined, gaunt forms of the slumbering dogs, and on the dark shadowy trees and bushes around.

The sun had not yet risen, and the air was still misty and chill among the mountains, which lay stretched before me and around me, and must be crossed before its setting. Amidst the bleak tremendous solitude, it seemed that myself and guide were the only living moving things, and in the hushed stillness the spirit

sunk beneath the sense of utter loneliness, and of littleness, where all around was vast. But the sun rises to dispel doubts and fears; to gladden every thing, animate and inanimate; and touches the mountain peaks successively with fiery light, while the lower ranges and deep valleys are yet shadowy and undefined. Each minute now produces change, and each change how beautiful! On one side all is shrouded in cloud, which the eye in vain attempts to penetrate; then partial openings appear in the sweeping curtain, and through them gleams of cliffs, rocks, and forests are seen; of rainbow-hues, sunny, and soft, and scarcely more substantial than the thin vapour that has yielded for a moment, and again closed its fleecy veil around them. As the sun mounts higher, the mists yield to his power; in some places they still cling for a time to the craggy summits, as if reluctant to quit their resting-place; and in others, assuming strange, phantastic forms, shoot up into the calm blue sky, and having reached it, melt into nothing.

And now that the last vapour is gone, and we have scaled the heights, and halt to rest our horses, and to look down upon a boundless savage region of grey, lofty summits, bare ridges, deep chasms, and lonely glens, how breathless and overpowering are the sensations produced! I remember saying, when a boy, that life could have no after-feeling equal to that excited by being, for the first time, amidst the mountains, their clouds, and their shadows; and now, with the knowledge of experience, I repeat that it has not.

We toil down the difficult descents, in the languid mid-day heat, through naked, rifted rocks, scorched, blackened Proteas, and withered shrubs, and the weary riders command a wild and sterile extent of cliff, of mountain, and ravine; while, far below, the river's sinuous course is traced, by the skirting of trees that shelter and conceal it. In ascending they pass wooded steeps and fastnesses, and stand on the brink of dark, gloomy abysses; spots wild and lonesome as ever mountain

eagle or savage vulture soared above. It is evening, and the stars are beginning to shine out, and the dusky mountains to look larger in the gloom, and the jackal's shrill melancholy cry is heard; at first, one solitary, startling shriek, which is quickly answered from the dim hills by the lazy, protracted, dreary scream of many, rendering that which was lonely before doubly lonely; for there are sounds with which the spirit owns no companionship.

Then there was the bivouac in Kafferland. Our tent is pitched, our horses and cattle turned out to graze. The fires are lighted, and the Kaffers are collected from the neighbouring kraals, bringing all their little stores for barter; baskets of sweet and sour milk, pumpkins, mats, Kaffer and Indian corn; and beads and buttons are the purchase-money; while those who have nothing to sell, beg for barseela, (a present,) with their soft voices; and, to render the appeal irresistible, the infants that hang at the women's backs are taught to put out their little hands; and then the girls tell you that

you are *Incos*, (a Chief,) and that you are rich, and that you are handsome; and he must be a sterner philosopher than I am who can resist all these.

It is night, and our visitors are gone, and the attendant Kaffers alone remain, and the moon is looking down from a sky without a cloud, and all is still; the tale of the story-teller is finished, and the listeners asleep round the embers, their darkly-shrouded figures forming the radii to a circle whose centre is the fire. There is not a sound, save the river's murmur, as the waters glide calmly and darkly on beneath the thickly-clustering foliage and giant trees.

Then the rides with my silent Hottentot guide, who never interrupts me during the livelong day; and it is now late, and the shadows have shifted round since we mounted, and the evening hour is approaching, so welcome in these climes, where the sun sheds "intolerable day," and we have yet that sombre, shaggy ravine to descend, and to cross the river

that flows in the hollow, and then to climb the steepness of the opposite side. We lead our horses down the narrow, winding path that has been opened through the trees and bushes that meet above, the trunks and shattered branches often impeding us, and showing that the elephants have been lately there; and the guide listens anxiously, and whistles to scare them away. We startle the water-birds from their haunts in the rocky cliff, and hear the guana's sullen plunge in the water as we ford the stream; and now, on ascending the opposite hill, the country becomes more open, and the dimness of evening is stealing over the distant mountains, and the grey river on whose windings we look down, and the near foliage becomes darker and richer in its tints, while the descending dews send forth fresh and fragrant odours from the jasmine with its starry flowers, and from many scented shrubs; and the night-hawk is skimming round with its bat-like flight, and the fire-flies are glimmering like flickering sparks of flame; and ere we reach our

night lodging, the wolf's distant, melancholy whoop is heard.

And then my halting-place during the sultry noon. I have lain stretched at my ease on soft, cool moss and fern, in the shade of a steep, wooded kloof, in that listless, idle mood that the mid-day heat produces, looking up at the deep-blue, cloudless sky, seen through the boughs, and on the bright green, transparent leaves, which formed a canopy above impervious to the sun. Near me, towering above the rest, rose the yellow-wood tree, its trunk of a rich red tint, marked with brown purple veins, the upper branches showing dark, even amidst the foliage of deepest bronze green; while from them trailed light, stringy creepers, and that large one, known in Africa by the name of the monkey-rope, hung around in its twisted strength, far thicker than the largest cable. Close to the yellow-wood tree, and in beautiful contrast with its stern character, was one with bright silver bark, the "lady of the forest," of graceful form, and light flexile boughs, and

feathery foliage, that moved to airs so soft, that they brought no sense of coolness; and there were some covered with rich purple and red blossoms, and others whose trunks were leafed to their roots, like the feathers of the hawk reaching to its talons; and one wild, withered, high-bending trunk, cold grey and black, whose branches had fallen away one by one, and left it desolate, speaking to the heart of death amidst verdure and bloom. Then the tendrils of the wild vine and a net-work of creepers hung around, light as the shadows that they cast, and some mingled their scarlet flowers with the deep foliage of the trees, and fell from their lower branches in light festoons, which those that trailed along the ground rose, in clustering hillocks of rank vegetation, to meet.

In my dreamy mood, in a scene of such deeply sequestered beauty, I have almost felt like the visionary described by Coleridge, who,

> "——" of this busy human heart aweary,
> Worships the spirit of unconscious life
> In tree or wild flower."

My feelings are alive to all that Nature offers, whether of beautiful or savage; whether to those wild, grey, haggard vultures which have found a prey on the side of that dark kloof, from which my approach has scared them, and some are hovering near, and some are eyeing me from the rocks, while others are soaring high above in wheeling circles watching my departure,—or to the troop of spring-bucks, (the most graceful of the Gazelles,) that break with their light forms the distant outline of some vast plain, and then, in a minute clearing the intervening space, cross my path, and stop and turn to gaze, and if pursued, burst away with their bounding motion. I have watched and seen them rise two yards above the heads of their companions, and at times even higher, while spreading the white fur on their backs and looking round on their pursuers in triumph, their slight limbs almost appeared suspended in the air. It was curious too to observe the various positions into which they threw themselves when taking these lofty

leaps: sometimes their backs were raised and curved, their heads bent downwards, and all their feet brought together; at others, their bodies assumed a hollow form, and the slender fore-legs were thrown straight out from the shoulder. It almost seemed as if the beautiful creatures had a pride mingled with their fear, in showing how various were their attitudes, and how graceful.

To me, wandering and constant change of scene is the highest excitement, and the face of Nature, in all her various aspects, a silent delight. I have sought the drear mountain's side when the thunder clouds were collecting and wrapping the sky in gloom which each minute rendered deeper, and watched for that dead, still hush that precedes the tremendous burst, and listened for the reverberating echoes that follow it, repeated again and again by the grey cliffs until the last low mutter became a doubt. I have ridden through the lonely green ravines when the wind-storm was at its height, and the tall forest-trees bowed before it, and all living

things cowered and sought shelter, and my hardy horse turned abruptly round, unable to face its fury, and his rider had to exert his utmost strength to keep his seat: then would come a pause, and its low moaning would be heard among the high branches and rifted rocks—a melancholy sound, as of regret for the violence that had just passed away.

You will tell me, that I am "a dreamer among men, an idle dreamer," and bid me look forward to the future, not back upon the past: the future,—it will indeed be in striking contrast to the wild scenes I have described, as opposite as galloping over a country without an inclosure, and almost without an inhabitant,—my guide having one led-horse in hand, and I another,—to riding along a turnpike road with its common sights and sounds, its mile-stones, hand-posts, trimmed hedges, notices against trespassing, staring red brick houses, and country girls, innocent and natural as those in London! It will be indeed a change from the bivouac, with the dark forms of the red Kaffers round

me, rendered wilder by the glare of the fire; with a cloudless sky, and a moon of beauty above, glancing a cold light on the withered tree that throws its pale phantom form across the sky;—to turn to London at the same hour, with the blaze of its lights, the incessant whirl of its carriages, and that striking contrast which it presents between all that is brilliant in pleasure, and abject in poverty and vice.

There are—there must be recollections, and thoughts, and hopes, that spring up on returning, after an absence of years, to the country of our childhood, that have much of the freshness of our early days; and I too feel them, now that the vessel is cutting its way through the waves, leaving a bright track of foam behind it, and the wind is fair, and our sails, lately so idly flapping, are strained and full, and the water is changing from deep-blue to green, as we approach soundings, and the lone sea-fowl is come out many a league to welcome us from its nest in England's cliffy coast—strange bird, whose white wing glancing to the sun,

gives brightness to the calm; and when the waves rise and the winds howl, whose wailing cry is heard in their hushes,—whose form, now lost in the sparkling foam of the crested wave, now soaring high amidst the cold, grey, hurrying clouds, breasts the blast,—for a moment appears to balance itself amidst the wild turmoil, and then yielding to its power, is borne away with the speed of light, and adds yet another horror to the storm.

Yes,—you are a fitting welcomer to my country; for in my memory you are connected with a thousand scenes of boyhood's happy days, when I wandered among the beetling cliffs, while you swooped with a rushing sound near the intruder on your savage solitudes, or sat for hours on some grey rock, watching the towering clouds in their snow-white purity, or the mountains with their deep-blue, shadowy recesses, which my imagination would people with fairy forms, or the sea in its boundless extent of calm magnificence—so smooth as it

lay far below me, that the ripple left by your skimming wing was visible, and the sole sounds were the small waves breaking on the beach, or your strange, melancholy note heard when your high, white form was scarcely visible.

I have met with you, too, in far inland scenes, when wandering amidst the purple heather hills, when the clouds had descended, and all was dim, obscure, and undefined,—where fragments of rock, rent by the wintry storms from the surrounding mountains, formed a wild and striking foreground,—where the grey shell of a ruined castle, of a race long since passed away, stood on a mound that looked down on the Tarn, with its black sullen waters:—here have I seen you lightly floating,—a speck of white amidst a scene of deep impressive gloom, rejoicing in your utter loneliness.

While I have watched your wavering, crooked pinions, clearly defined upon the cold, green waves, my thoughts have travelled back many

a long year, and past scenes have crossed my memory with more than the vividness of the present.

But while my eye still would follow, you have vanished, returned to that country to which I, too, am returning.—Lone welcomer, fare ye well!

THE END.

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